ZELIA,

IN THE

DESERT.

I WAS very impatient for there turn of our voyagers. I went every minute to the ſea-ſhore. My anxiety, and the uneaſineſs of my companions, was ſo much the greater, as we had expected them for three days. I will not take up your time, madam, in repeating the concern of theſe poor women, nor of my deſpair, during an abſence which appeared ſo tedious and inſupportable, that we agreed to go and meet them by way of the foreſt, keeping cloſe by the water-ſide. We walked on a great part of the day without meeting any thing; but in the evening, as we had

juſt determined to return home to our dwelling, deſpairing of ſeeing them, we perceived them at a little diſtance upon the ſhore, employed in repairing the boat, which a ſudden gale had almoſt overſet. I ran to my maſter, who, as ſoon as he ſaw me, haſtened to meet me. "What has happened to you, Sir?" ſaid I, addreſſing him. "Nothing but "diſappointment," replied he: "I am "in deſpair. We could never reach the "ſhore where theſe good people perceived "the unfortunate Zelia. I ſaw the rock; "but the boat was unable to approach "it." I aſked the old man: he ſaid the ſame thing; but at the ſame time he made me underſtand that it was not neceſſary to renounce the ſcheme entirely, as he hoped to be able to conſtruct a boat larger and ſtronger. This we all laboured at as ſoon as we returned to our habitation; but it was not the work of a day; many months were taken up in this employment, during which my maſter was devoured by his grief and impatience. He often told me, he ſhould never

never enjoy the felicity of finding you again; it was in vain to flatter himself with it. "And even were we to succeed in our enterprise," said he, "how can "I be sure of finding her in the place "where she was seen by these good "people? She is perhaps a wanderer in "the forest, without clothes, or without "habitation. She has not, like us, re-"sources found from the wreck of the "vessel. What a miserable fate is hers! "Ah!" said he, "you would not have "me afflict myself, nor deplore the cruel "destiny which shewed me a single mo-"ment of happiness, only to sink me "deeper into despair." Thus it was he always answered to the hopes which I endeavoured to give him; and he was still worse when, after the boat was perfectly ready, we could not meet with a favourable moment to set sail. Contrary winds rendered the voyage absolutely impossible during two months. The good old man was almost as impatient as ourselves at this delay; he every day made new attempts, but in vain. My

maſter conſtantly employed himſelf in managing the boat alone, in order to learn the method, and to profit by the firſt favourable wind. At length this moment, ſo much deſired, arrived. On the 6th of June, a memorable day which I ſhall never forget, we ſet ſail with great joy, and arrived the ſame evening at the ſo much wiſhed-for ſhore. You know the reſt, Madam; but you could not know, nor can I ever expreſs, the tranſports of joy my maſter experienced on landing upon the fortunate rock on which you had been ſeen by our good friends. " It was there," ſaid he, looking upon the rock, " that ſhe was ſeated. " It is perhaps in this very place where " I now am, that ſhe has ſometimes re- " gretted my loſs. Ah! why cannot " I find ſome marks of her remembrance " of me upon this ſtone? I have many " times engraved the name of Zelia on " trees and rocks in the places where " I have ſought her. Why cannot I find " ſome proof of her affection? Can ſhe " have forgot the name of her unfor-

" tunate

"tunate lover? Does ſhe not remember "the ſacred engagements which ſhe has "contracted with me? But it is not on "marble that I ought to ſeek for the teſ- "timonies of her love. It is in her "tender and faithful heart that I ſhall "again find my joy and happineſs." As he pronounced theſe laſt words, he went on by the ſide of the foreſt, while I was employed in faſtening the boat to the ſhore. I ſaw him ſtop at a little diſtance, and enter a beaten path, which, as I imagined, conducted him to your dwelling. The marks of footſteps troubled him, and made him for ſome time fix his eyes on your habitation. This houſe, ſo well built, amazed him. You could not be there alone. This idea ſtruck him to the heart. I ſaw him for a time undetermined what method to purſue. He proceeded a few paces, and then came back towards me; but ſoon again advanced the other way, till at length I ſaw him walk reſolutely up to the houſe, which he entered with courage; but, meeting with no one in it, he came

directly back, to tell me his new diſcovery, and his new fears. "What am "I to expect?" ſaid he, after he had told me what he had ſeen. "Who can "be the owner of this dwelling ſo neat "and convenient in every reſpect? Zelia "cannot be the ſole miſtreſs of it; with "whom, then, can ſhe ſhare in this ſolitary habitation? I am loſt in theſe "terrible and cruel conjectures. Tell "me—what do you think? Do you not "perceive, that I may poſſibly find myſelf ſtill more unhappy than I have "been hitherto?——Alas! rather tell "me nothing; leave me in uncertainty, "which will ſtill permit me to hope for "that happineſs which I think I deſerve. "Surely the tender, the virtuous Zelia, "cannot have entirely forgot me!" As he ſaid this, we heard ſome noiſe in the foreſt; and after deſiring me not to quit the boat, he advanced towards the wood, a great part of which he went over without meeting with you. But in the moment he was returning to me, he perceived Mademoiſelle Ninette, who, as

you

you know, was exceſſively frightened at him. She alſo gave him infinite uneaſineſs, by calling you her mamma; and you, Madam, alſo called her your child. He doubted not but ſhe was ſo in reality. You know the firſt impreſſion which this miſtake cauſed in him; but you cannot imagine the deſpair he was in when he quitted you. On perceiving him at a diſtance, returning alone, I at firſt thought that he had not been able to find you, and went towards him in order to enquire, when I obſerved by his countenance and manner, that he was under the deepeſt affliction. He walked very faſt, his head ſunk down, and without following the right path. He even hurt himſelf, by coming ſtraight through the buſhes, without ſeeking to avoid the obſtacles which were in his road. "What can "have happened to you, Sir?" ſaid I, going towards him in order to ſtop him. "Have you not been able to meet with "Mademoiſelle Zelia?" "Ah! my dear "friend," ſaid he, throwing himſelf in my arms, "I have but too plainly ſeen

" her perfidy; let us go. —— No," ſaid he the next moment; and, laying himſelf down at the foot of a tree, almoſt fainted: " I will never quit this fatal place " till I have ſatisfied my vengeance." He remained ſome time abſorbed in theſe black ideas; he did not reply to any thing I ſaid, and appeared to pay no attention to me. I perceived a ſmall rivulet, which iſſued out of the mountain. I ran to fetch him a little water, which I gave him; but he puſhed me away from him, telling me, it was not ſuch feeble aſſiſtance that he wanted from me; but bid me run directly and fetch his fire-arms, which he had left in the boat. " Why " ſhould you want fire-arms?" ſaid I. " Are you in a ſituation to carry them " at this time? Try to compoſe yourſelf, " and recover your ſtrength, that you " may at leaſt be able to execute your " intentions. Come, Sir," ſaid I, preſenting my arm to him to help him up; " let us depart, as you at firſt ſaid; " let us return to our own habitation; " and when you have remained there long

" enough

" enough to recover yourſelf, you may " return hither to acquit yourſelf of the " cruel oath you have taken." He refuſed my arm, without giving me any anſwer. I inſiſted, but gained nothing by it. He talked to himſelf, and pronounced your name, but in a voice ſtifled by ſighs, which came from a heart torn to pieces by love and deſpair.

" In ſhort, madam," ſaid this honeſt man, " finding I only encreaſed his trouble by endeavouring to calm him, I addreſſed myſelf to Heaven, and implored the aſſiſtance of the Supreme Being for my maſter and myſelf. I beſought him on my knees, to come to my aid, to inſpire me with the means of bringing to reaſon this maſter ſo juſt and ſo good. " He " is," ſaid I, " O gracious God, the " moſt worthy of your creatures. Do " not abandon him! Remind him of " his duty towards you, and of the vir- " tuous principles from which his no- " ble and generous heart has never " wandered." But I perceive how

much this ſad recital afflicts you," ſaid Jerome, obſerving my face bathed in tears; "I have been too particular in relating theſe unhappy circumſtances, which you ought never to remember. Forgive my imprudence; for which I reproach myſelf the more, as my maſter, in allowing me to ſatisfy your curioſity on this ſubject, had deſired me to paſs lightly over that which perſonally concerned him." "Zelia," ſaid he, one day when you had been ſoliciting him to give you the account of our melancholy adventures, "will interrogate you; you "muſt pay a proper regard to her ſenſi- "bility and my credit; do not, my good "friend, let her know the injurious de- "ſign I had formed againſt her in thoſe "moments of deſpair in which you ſaw "me; her pure and gentle heart would be "ſhocked at the frightful picture of my "phrenzy. Inſtead of my unjuſt ſuſpi- "cions, let her only perceive the pier- "cing ſorrows of a heart penetrated by "the cruel idea of having loſt her. I "have conſtantly avoided, to this time,

"en-

" entering into particulars with her " on theſe delicate circumſtances. You " muſt take on yourſelf the charge of " relating them to her. Acquaint her " alſo with the death of her father, which " ſhe is deſirous to hear, and with " our deliverance from the ſhipwreck, as " well as the meeting with thoſe good " people who pointed out to us her ha- " bitation." " Ah, my dear Jerome," ſaid I, interrupting him haſtily, " tell me " of this honeſt family who are the cauſe " of our preſent happineſs; what is become " of them, why did they not come here " with you?" " They were gone away a " long time before we were able to ſuc- " ceed in gaining the ſhore on your " ſide," ſaid he; " the time of their har- " veſt obliged them to return to their " own country." " At leaſt," ſaid I, " the young woman might have come " with you." " It was not her fault that " ſhe did not accompany us," ſaid Je- rome; " ſhe earneſtly entreated my maſ- " ter to permit her, and made many re- " queſts to her parents to be allowed to

" remain with us, but her mother would " on no account conſent to it." " What, " would ſhe have left her parents to fol- " low M. d'Ermancour?" This queſtion, which I aſked with earneſtneſs, amazed poor Jerome; he ſaw my uneaſineſs by the bluſhes on my cheeks; and the inquiries which I afterwards made concerning her perſon and charms, convinced him of what I ſhould have been aſhamed to own even to myſelf. But this good man, who had no greater pleaſure than in doing juſtice to the amiable qualities of his maſter, preſently deſtroyed the diſagreeable impreſſion which had juſt taken aim at my heart. " Maria was pretty " enough," ſaid he; " but if my maſter " had had no other engagements, I do not " think he would have been ſtruck by the " unpoliſhed attractions of this young " woman. He treated her with kind- " neſs, and often talked to her of you, " and of your beauty, and ſtill more of " your virtue, and that delicate modeſty " which you poſſeſs, and of which this " poor girl had not an idea. But ſhe had a

" good

" good heart, and was mild, and ſenſible " to the ſmalleſt reproach. The reproofs " of my maſter affected her much; " ſhe was more obedient to him than " to her parents; but he never made " any other uſe of the power he had " over her, than to correct, as much " as he could, the faults of her ruſtic " education." " Why did he never " ſpeak to me of this Indian girl," ſaid I, " nor of her parents, to whom we owe " ſuch obligations?" " It was from deli- " cacy," ſaid Jerome; " for though he " wiſhed you to be informed of every " thing I have now told you, he never " could determine to tell it you himſelf." " I ſhould be in deſpair," ſaid he ſome- times, " if my charming Zelia did not " do juſtice to the ſentiments of my " heart: the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion, or the " ſhadow of a cloud upon her counte- " nance, would humble my pride, and " wound my heart."

" Ah, madam!" ſaid this faithful ſer- vant, " you do not yet know my maſter " ſufficiently, to be ſenſible as I am of

" all

" all the virtues of his mind." I found by this, Jerome had gueſſed at my ſentiments; and the opinion which he had of his maſter's good qualities gave me a very high opinion of him: I thought myſelf much obliged to him for the pains he took to juſtify his conduct; and after I had told him ſo, I went to join M. d'Ermancour, whom I had obſerved for ſome time playing with Ninette in the garden.

" I have prepared every thing," ſaid this good friend, " for our little voyage: " we will ſet out whenever you pleaſe; " the boat is quite ready; I have been " to ſee it myſelf." We went on board it the next morning, in order to ſee after all the effects which he had ſaved from the wreck: I found them all in good condition, as Jerome had told me they were. I cannot expreſs the pleaſure I felt in finding myſelf in the ſame place, where this tender lover had lived ſo long, wiſhing to find me and lamenting my loſs. Every thing I ſaw there intereſted me greatly. On entering a kind of cabin

which

which he had built, I was ſtruck with admiration, and penetrated by the moſt tender ſentiments; but I could not call to mind the ſhort ſpace we had come over, to arrive at this place, without aſtoniſhment.

"Is it poſſible," ſaid I, with a kind of vexation, "that we ſhould have lived ſo "long, and ſo near to each other, without "having ever met!" In ſhort, I found my houſe was at a very ſmall diſtance on the eaſt ſide of the foreſt, but I did not then diſcover the inacceſſible mountain which ſeparated us. M. d'Ermancour, in conducting me through the wood, had made me remark it, and I was then convinced by the ſight of this barrier, that ſcarce even a bird could paſs that way. As we walked in the paths which M. d'Ermancour directed me to take, I obſerved how carefully they had been attended to, and I ſoon diſcovered theſe had been his favourite walks. I ſaw my name engraved on the bark of many trees; and both our names formed into cyphers and true-lovers' knots, with verſes written under them

them applicable to our ſituation. With what pleaſure did I read theſe tender and delicate verſes, addreſſed to me! It was a new enjoyment more pleaſing, and perhaps more felt, than even that which I proved on ſeeing my lover again. I was more affected in the firſt interview, and more agitated; but the degree of enthuſiaſm and pain, which is often excited by too ſtrong paſſions, were not comparable to the ſweet and tranquil pleaſure which affected my mind in this delightful place. Every object around me ſeemed beings who ſpoke to my heart by pointing out the period of thoſe years which we had paſſed in mutually regretting the abſence of each other. Theſe delightful walks were terminated by a building, which M. d'Ermancour was impatient for me to ſee, but would not mention to me, that he might be witneſs to my aſtoniſhment; and in this he perfectly ſucceeded, as I diſcovered the utmoſt ſurpriſe on entering a kind of grotto moſt artfully decorated, where I ſaw a picture of myſelf and my lover, at full length, both

ſo

ſo well painted, and ſuch ſtriking likeneſſes, that I was almoſt frightened, and the more aſtoniſhed, as I had quite forgot, that among many other talents, M. d'Ermancour poſſeſſed that of painting.

I did not in the firſt moment recollect, that I had ſeen him during our paſſage very attentive to preſerve a box which contained colours and canvas for painting, and that he had often told me, he had brought them with him, in hopes that my poor friend and I would permit him to draw our pictures as ſoon as we arrived at Batavia. I remained ſome minutes quite immovable, with my eyes fixed on this painting, the ſubject of which called forth the moſt tender ſentiments of my heart. In the back ground appeared a ſhipwreck, and M. d'Ermancour at a diſtance, in the attitude of a man who had ſeen periſh the perſon moſt dear to him on earth. The grief and deſpair which this faithful lover had felt at the fatal moment of our ſeparation, was ſo well expreſſed in his features, that the moſt inſenſible perſon could not look

look on it with indifference; it affected me ſo much, that I burſt into tears, and threw myſelf into the arms of this tender lover, who in preſſing me to his heart applauded himſelf for having touched mine by this picture of his woe; but he adviſed me for the future only to regard it as a dream, ſince we were now re-united. At that moment we obſerved Ninette, who was greatly ſurpriſed to ſee, as ſhe entered the grotto, ſeveral perſons who reſembled her mamma and M. d'Ermancour; the picture which firſt attracted my notice not being the only one in the grotto. There was another oppoſite to it, in which I was repreſented ſitting on a rock by the ſea-ſide, and looking with a melancholy countenance on that fatal element. In a third picture, my lover was painted ſitting under a tree in a foreſt; tears appeared falling from his eyes, as they were fixed on a weeping Cupid placed at his feet. Theſe figures, ſo naturally and ſo well expreſſed, greatly exerciſed the lively and penetrating imagination of poor Ninette.

nette. She could not conceive how M. d'Ermancour, with a little paint and a bruſh, could be able to deceive her with reſemblances ſo juſt: "For," ſaid ſhe, "it "is my mamma whom I ſee upon the rock, "weeping for M. d'Ermancour and her "father." She went from that to another, which equally attracted her admiration; and the picture of the unhappy lover, with tears in his eyes, and the weeping Cupid, inſpired her with a very natural reflection: "Are there no means," ſaid ſhe to M. d'Ermancour, "to efface theſe "tears which I ſee with pain ready to "fall from your eyes? And this little "infant too—I wiſh I were able to give "him conſolation." "It ſhall be done, "charming Ninette," ſaid my lover; "your remarks are juſt; nothing ought "now to appear on my countenance but "the joy by which my heart is anima-"ted, ſince I have again found your ami-"able mamma. As to the little child," ſaid he, looking archly at me, "we "will leave him to weep till he is ſtill "more happy; at preſent we muſt em-

"ploy

" ploy ourſelves in unfurniſhing this grot-
" to, that we may be able before night to
" pack up theſe pictures, together with
" all the other things, which you have
" not yet ſeen." He then called Jerome, whom he charged with this employ, whilſt we returned to the firſt habitation. I cried out with joy and ſurpriſe, when I ſaw before my eyes almoſt all the effects which I had ſeen embarked on our departure from France. I ſhall not enumerate here every thing which was contained in ſuch a number of caſes and packages, but will only ſay, I was rejoiced to ſee ſo many clothes and neceſſaries from my own country. It ſeemed as if every thing was brought back to me; there was nothing, even to the portmanteaus, that I was not pleaſed to ſee; even planks, cordage, and nails, had all been preſerved againſt a time when they might ſerve for uſe. Ninette, who had never ſeen ſuch fine things, was equally aſtoniſhed and delighted; ſhe tried on all the dreſſes that came to her hands, and never ceaſed to repeat,

repeat, "O mamma, how pretty this is! "See mamma, how well this cap fits me; "'tis ſurely from Heaven they muſt have "come." As I never deceived her, I told her, that every thing ſhe ſaw came from my country. "It is a delightful "country then," ſaid ſhe, looking at a hat trimmed with flowers; "I wiſh I "could ſee the country which produces "ſuch beautiful things." From this time ſhe every day aſked queſtions of Jerome, which made me fear ſhe had taken a diſguſt to the ſituation ſhe was in, as ſhe eagerly attended to all we ſaid concerning the cuſtoms and amuſements of our country.

One day when ſhe was making enquiries of Jerome, about thoſe fine places which ſhe ſo much wiſhed to ſee, he aſked her why ſhe did not addreſs herſelf to me, who could give a much better account of them than he could. "Why," ſaid ſhe, "mamma does not attend to me "when I aſk her queſtions; but you, my "dear Jerome, who have lived ſo long "in the world, you ought to know all

"the

" the cuſtoms of it. Pray tell me, how are
" people of my age treated in large ci-
" ties, where the houſes are in ſuch num-
" bers that they cannot be counted, and
" where the ſtreets are crowded with peo-
" ple always going and coming. Doubt-
" leſs you knew them all, you ſpoke to
" them whenever you met them. I think
" it muſt be very comical to run about
" the ſtreets here and there." " Made-
" moiſelle," ſaid Jerome, " you would
" not run in the ſtreets if you were there;
" perſons of your age and condition ne-
" ver go out but in carriages, with their
" mamma's or their governeſſes." " O,
" I know thoſe carriages, I have heard
" mamma ſpeak of them, they are like a
" little chamber where one is ſeated cloſe
" by a window; is it not ſo, M. Jerome?
" I can underſtand that, but I cannot
" ſee ſo well how this little chamber is
" carried in the ſtreets, by animals ſo
" ſtrong, and at the ſame time ſo gentle,
" as to be eaſily guided by one man,
" without their trying to diſengage
" themſelves from ſo heavy a burthen.

" But

" But this is not what moſt intereſts me,
" when I hear of thoſe wonderful things
" which M. d'Ermancour and mamma
" talk about: it is their brilliant aſſem-
" blies which I want ſo much to ſee;
" the fine gentlemen and ladies ſo
" richly dreſſed, who dance to the ſound
" of many inſtruments, in large rooms
" ſo finely ornamented; where all the
" pleaſures are aſſembled together, and
" every one makes choice of that which
" is moſt ſuitable to their age and diſ-
" poſition; for example now, I ſhould
" dance while mamma would talk to M.
" d'Ermancour, and we ſhould both be
" equally happy." "Ah, Mademoiſelle,
" you only wiſh for theſe amuſements
" becauſe you are unacquainted with
" them. Thoſe which you enjoy
" here are far preferable; there is no-
" thing ſo agreeable in the world as in
" this beautiful foreſt, where at all times
" you may walk, jump, or dance un-
" der the ſhade of theſe large trees."
" Yes, I like the trees very well," ſaid
Ninette; " but they are only made to
" give

" give the birds pleaſure: I can hold no " converſation with them." My arrival at that moment put an end to this converſation, of which we ſhall ſoon ſee the reſult.

About ſix months after M. d'Ermancour had been with us, I found Ninette one day alone, and very ſerious, in the pavilion in the garden, where ſhe kept a great many little birds of different kinds, which ſhe brought up with great care. My ſurpriſe was very great, on entering, to find the window open, and not a ſingle bird left in the place. " What is " it I ſee my dear?" ſaid I. " Are all " your birds flown away?" " Yes, mam- " ma," replied ſhe. " But how could " they all eſcape at the ſame time, my " child?" ſaid I. " You aſtoniſh me " by appearing ſo eaſy about it: you, " whom I have ſeen weep three or four " days when a linnet was drowned in " waſhing itſelf." " O, that was very " different," ſaid ſhe, with a myſterious air; " I wept for the misfortune of one " little creature; but I take a pleaſure

" to-day

" to-day in the happineſs which I have pro-
" cured for them, by ſetting them all at li-
" berty." This diſtinction, formed by a delicate ſentiment, would have given me great pleaſure, if I had not obſerved a little peeviſhneſs in her anſwer: I became in my turn ſomewhat vexed: " Does this child," ſaid I to myſelf, " wiſh to reproach me with
" the ſituation to which fate has reduced
" her?" The idea of it gave me pain; I ſhed ſome tears, which I could not conceal from my little friend, though I did the motive of them, which I pretended aroſe from the goodneſs of her heart, that had preferred the happineſs of theſe little birds to her own ſatisfaction. But I told her, ſhe had deceived herſelf, for that ſhe had done quite the contrary to what ſhe wiſhed.

" What! have not I rendered theſe little
" creatures happy?"—" No, my dear,
" you have delivered them up to their
" enemies. You have abandoned them
" to themſelves, after having given
" them an education which will be the
" means of their periſhing miſerably.
" They know not how to ſeek their

" food, having been uſed to find it al-
" ways ready for them, whenever they
" wanted it; and they will not know
" how to ſecure themſelves from the
" ſnares of their enemies, becauſe they
" lived here free from danger. In ſhort,
" they are not formed to live with their
" fellow-creatures; and this, my dear
" child, you did not foreſee when you
" gave way to the firſt impulſe of your
" heart. Your motive is however ſo
" good that I cannot reproach you
" with it."—" I do not reproach my-
" ſelf with it in the leaſt," ſaid ſhe;
" for I hope they will ſoon recover their
" habit of living at liberty. Beſides,
" have not the young ones got their
" pápa's and mamma's with them, and—"
She ſtopped, and looked at me. Her
idea, which I ſaw through, afflicted me.
—" I ſee with concern," ſaid I, " that
" you will not give up your opinion:
" I have not been accuſtomed to find
" you entertain ſentiments contrary to
" mine. Is it that you no longer place
" that confidence in me, which formed

" our

" our mutual happineſs? or, do you " think yourſelf of an age in which you " cannot deceive yourſelf?"—She made no anſwer.—" This ſilence proves that " you perſiſt."—" No, mamma; I be- " lieve what you ſay; but-—" " But! " what does this *but* mean, my dear " Ninette? Why do you appear to heſi- " tate, who have always been ſo free, " and ſo eager to inform me of all your " thoughts?"—" Ah, mamma! times are " much changed," ſaid ſhe, turning her face to the window to hide her tears.— " What do you ſay, my dear child? " Of what change do you ſpeak?" add- ed I, taking her in my arms: " Tell " me, what is it afflicts your heart? " You know the tenderneſs of mine; " you know that I only lived to love " and to take care of you. Can you " ſuſpect—" Here her tears increaſed, and mine ran in abundance. I recol- lected the reproaches ſhe had a right to make me. I had greatly neglected her ſince the arrival of M. d'Er- mancour; and I fancied all her little

petulance proceeded from her apprehenſions of loſing my affection. But I was miſtaken. Her curioſity to ſee a world of which ſhe was ignorant, and of which ſhe continually heard us talk; the pleaſure of being ſeen by it, and the idea ſhe had formed of it from our converſations and the books which I had permitted her to read, had ſuch an effect on her mind, that I was really aſtoniſhed at it.—"You weep, mamma," ſaid ſhe: "Alas! "it is I that am the cauſe of your tears. "You would be happy, were it not for "me."—"Do you think ſo, my dear "child?"—"Yes, mamma, I do believe "it; you already are ſo much ſo; you "have every thing you can wiſh for; "M. d'Ermancour is the cauſe of "your happineſs, as you are of his. "As to me, I can give none to any "body. I am now quite alone in a "Deſert," ſaid ſhe, looking towards the foreſt; "if I were in the world, I ſhould "look out for a friend; I ſhould have "companions of my own age, who would "love me and converſe with me."—

"What

" What is this I hear, my dear Ni-
" nette?" ſaid I. " What! is it you
" who ſay ſuch cruel things to me?
" Is it you who wiſh yourſelf far from
" me? What reaſon have you for ſaying
" ſo? Why do you ſay you are here
" alone? Am I no longer any thing to
" you, my dear child? Have you then
" forgot what I have ſo many times
" told you, that the connection which
" attached me to you, was perhaps
" ſtronger than thoſe even of nature?
" Till now, I thought yours was equally
" ſtrong to me, and that you were
" happy and contented: you have
" told me ſo repeatedly. What is it,
" then, which has altered your ſenti-
" ments? What is it which makes your
" ſituation here ſo diſagreeable? Impart
" your uneaſineſs to me, my good child,
" and tell me what has occaſioned it?"—
She was ſo much affected that I could get nothing from her but tears, which I at length put an end to; but it was not till many days after, that I could obtain from her a confeſſion of her new

ſentiments. My diſcovery of them interrupted my felicity. M. d'Ermancour ſuffered alſo, by ſeeing me ſo much affected by the caprice of an infant, as he called her. But this infant was unhappy: ſhe had owned it to me. Accuſtomed from her earlieſt age to diſcover her moſt ſecret thoughts to me, ſhe acknowledged freely, that every thing in this ſolitude diſpleaſed her, ſince ſhe had compared it with the fine country ſhe had heard ſpoken of. That ſhe had an inexpreſſible deſire to ſee all ſhe had heard of; and that the idea of never being able to go from this little ſpot, which ſhe called a priſon, ſometimes made her quite miſerable; and that it was in one of theſe moments of ſecret grief, that ſhe had given liberty to all her little birds.

I tried to undeceive her, by deſcribing to her all the inconveniences of ſociety in that world ſhe ſo much wiſhed to mix with, and the misfortunes to which perſons of her age and ſex were expoſed. M. d'Ermancour, and even Jerome, took pains, as well as myſelf, to expatiate on the

the pleaſures of ſolitude, and the happineſs to be enjoyed by a little ſociety retired from the world. We did every thing in our power to divert and amuſe her. She entered into all our little ſchemes to entertain her with great good humour; but her heart took no ſhare in them. She ſometimes even appeared fatigued with our attentions to pleaſe her; and, to avoid them, would retire to the moſt ſolitary parts of the foreſt, where ſhe would have paſſed whole days if I had not gone to ſeek her.—This manner of acting troubled me much, and appeared very ſingular in a girl between thirteen and fourteen. Her naturally mild diſpoſition had given me hopes that ſhe would have no violent paſſions to ſtruggle with; and, thinking that ſhe had no ideas but what aroſe from a heightened imagination, I hoped that time, and my continued advice, would bring her back to reaſon. But it was not till ſome years after, that ſhe by degrees recovered her former cheerfulneſs, which was ſoon communicated to our little ſociety.

We were charmed to ſee her content; but when I applauded myſelf in particular for having ſo well underſtood her character, I diſcovered that her paſſions were the ſame, and that ſhe had only changed the object of them. But as this is not the time to relate this diſagreeable event, I ſhall return to incidents more intereſting to me.

M. d'Ermancour has hitherto appeared in the enthuſiaſm of the moſt ardent affection, ſwearing at my feet to ſacrifice his wiſhes to my virtue. My heart, equally tender and ſenſible, yielded itſelf without reſtraint to the ſweet pleaſure of ſharing with this moſt amiable of men that felicity of which I was the arbitreſs, and which ſeemed every moment to increaſe, by a kind expreſſion, or an innocent embrace. Theſe delicate pleaſures, which are the delight and joy of chaſte and virtuous hearts, entirely completed my wiſhes. Two years paſſed in this ſweet enjoyment, which appeared to me but as two moments. At the end of this time, I thought I obſerved an alteration in

in the temper of M. d'Ermancour. From that time he appeared to fear, and even to diſlike thoſe innocent favours which my heart had yielded to his preſſing ſolicitations. He had no longer the ſame eagerneſs for our walking in the foreſt by ourſelves; he even ſeemed to avoid being alone with me. It may be eaſily imagined, I could not overlook theſe unpleaſing circumſtances. I was beſides ſo well convinced of his attachment to me, he had given me ſuch undoubted proofs of it, that I could not tell what to think of the kind of indifference which he ſhewed me. The more I ſaw him embarraſſed when we were alone, the more I endeavoured to ſoften his heart by tender and animated converſation, that I might without conſtraint expreſs the ſentiments of my heart. But the confeſſion of my tenderneſs for him, which had ſo often delighted him, ſeemed at this time to give him uneaſineſs, and make him avoid me. Sometimes he would liſten to me with great tenderneſs, fetch a deep ſigh on looking at me, and preſſing my hand in his, after putting it to

his heart, would leave me, to conceal his trouble. Aſtoniſhed as well as hurt by his conduct, which was ſo contrary to the amiable and gentle diſpoſition of my lover, I was confounded at ſeeing him leave me, and could neither follow him, nor keep him with me. Tears of the moſt bitter ſorrow ran down my cheeks, when I had loſt the hopes of ſeeing him return to me. The moſt painful reflections now preſaged griefs ſtill greater and more inſupportable than thoſe I had before experienced. What a wretched proſpect did this alteration in M. d'Ermancour's behaviour afford me! I could only attribute it to inconſtancy. What a misfortune for us both, if, as I ſuſpected, he found a reluctance to continue in an intimate ſociety with me! "I ſhall "ſoon ſee him," ſaid I, "repent of "the ſacrifice he has made me, and "deteſt the deplorable ſituation into "which I have drawn him: Alas! he "will only look upon me as the cauſe "of his misfortunes. Ah! my God!" cried I, raiſing my eyes and hands to Heaven;

Heaven; "Grant that I may never ex-
"perience this cruel deſtiny. Reſtore
"me this generous friend, whom thy
"goodneſs has preſerved and conduct-
"ed to me. Inſpire his noble and vir-
"tuous mind with the conſtancy and
"courage neceſſary to ſupport with pa-
"tience the grief in which I ſee him
"plunged. Remove from his diſturb-
"ed imagination thoſe afflicting ideas
"which render me unpleaſing to him.
"Teach me to make a laſting captive
"of that ſenſible heart, which you ſeem
"to have formed for the happineſs of
"my life."—Thus, without knowing the cauſe, did I implore the aſſiſtance of Heaven. Jerome, to whom I had imparted my uneaſineſs, and who, as well as myſelf, had remarked the change in his maſter's temper, confeſſed to me, that he often found him in the foreſt, poſſeſſed with ſome melancholy ideas which appeared greatly to affect him. He had ventured to queſtion him upon the ſubject; but had only received vague anſwers, from which he could learn nothing. At length, not being able any

longer to ſupport the cruel uncertainty which made us both unhappy, I one day determined to infringe the law which I had impoſed on myſelf, never to reproach my lover. Having ſeen him take the way to the foreſt, where I preſumed he would muſe alone and give himſelf up to melancholy, I followed him unperceived, and approached the place where he was ſitting. I heard him talking to Jerome; and on coming a little nearer, I obſerved M. d'Ermancour ſpoke in a very animated tone.

"Can you conceive," ſaid he, "the "abſurdity of the engagements which "I have contracted with Zelia? How can "ſhe hope that I ſhall always obſerve the "ſevere laws which ſhe has impoſed on "me? No; it is no longer poſſible "to reſiſt the tumultuous ſentiments "of my heart, and the lively impreſ-"ſions which the continual preſence of "this charming woman makes on me. "I muſt fly from her: I muſt go and "confine myſelf in the moſt retired part "of the foreſt, and there wait for the ter-"mination of a wretched life. I have

"promiſed

" promiſed to reſpect her: I have ſworn
" by all that is ſacred: I will never be
" guilty of perjury. No; Zelia ſhall never
" reproach me with having abuſed her
" confidence, or cauſing her unhappi-
" neſs. She ſhall never hear me re-
" proach her with having paid ſo dear
" to follow her. I have abandoned my
" eſtate, my fortune—I have ſacrificed
" all to find her again, and ſhe will
" not ſacrifice to me a falſe delicacy;
" for is it poſſible I can give her
" ſtronger proofs of my attachment?
" Can we add to our engagements thoſe
" forms which are out of our power?
" Ah! if ſhe loved me as I do her,
" would ſhe confine herſelf to laws,
" which are only made to promote in-
" tereſt and good order in large ſocie-
" ties? The union of two virtuous
" hearts, who mutually ſwear an eternal
" love, is, in my opinion, the moſt
" holy and the moſt inviolable of all
" engagements. But Zelia attends only
" to the chimerical laws of honour."—
Let any one judge my ſituation, when
I heard

I heard thoſe cruel words, *I muſt fly from her.* My ſenſes were quite confuſed, when he added, That he would go far from me, and end his miſerable life. However, I recovered by degrees, and the deſire I had to hear ſomething which might conſole me, gave me ſtrength to liſten to the reſt of the converſation.—"You know, Sir," ſaid Jerome, "I "have never abuſed the liberty you "have allowed me ſometimes to tell "you my opinion."—"On the con-"trary," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, you "have frequently given me good ad-"vice; but in the preſent circum-"ſtances you can only pity me."—"Pity you, Sir! for what ſhould I pity "you? If you do not regret all you "have quitted, I ſee not a mortal "more happy than yourſelf."—"Yes," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, "if I had found "in the heart of the inexorable Zelia "ſentiments like my own, I ſhould not "envy the fate of any one on earth."—"My dear maſter," ſaid Jerome, "you "do not yet know this adorable woman,

"whom

" whom you call cruel. She is more to
" be pitied than you are; ſhe ſuffers
" more than you do, ſince ſhe has diſ-
" covered that you are not happy.—
" 'I have been the cauſe of your maſ-
" ter's misfortunes,' ſaid ſhe to me one
" day, ſhedding tears, which pierced
" me to the heart. 'He will never find
" any thing here to recompenſe him for
" all he has quitted for me. His me-
" lancholy and troubled countenance
" gives me cauſe to believe that he be-
" gins to be tired of this ſolitude. If
" ſo, what reproaches might he not
" make me? But though he does not,
" I am too well acquainted with his way
" of thinking, and the goodneſs of his
" heart. It is not his reproaches which
" I fear. No; even were he to ceaſe to
" love me, he would not afflict me. It
" is the delicacy of his own ſentiments
" which I am afraid of. He will ſuffer
" without complaining, and his ſorrows
" will be the greater. But,' ſaid ſhe,
" after a moment's reflection, 'he has
" great confidence in you, my good
" friend,

" friend; might he not be brought " to communicate his chagrin to you? " Do not you fear to impart it to me. " Let us, if poſſible, unite our endea- " vours to draw him from this wretched " ſituation, which makes us all ſo un- " happy. What can you think of the " great alteration which you muſt have " obſerved in him for ſome time paſt?'— " I am convinced," added Jerome, " that you are very different from what " you uſed to be, and I am ignorant of " the cauſe. -But I think that you are " both wretched for want of underſtand- " ing each other. Mademoiſelle Zelia " thinks you regret the world you have " quitted for her; and you believe ſhe " does not love you ſo much as you " wiſh. Permit me to tell you, you " are both in an error."—" I am under " no error," ſaid this tender lover: " I " know Zelia's intentions; ſhe has but " too well explained them. I ſubmitted " to them, and have ſworn it."—Jerome then lowered his voice to ſay ſomething to his maſter, which I could not hear, but

but which I could eaſily comprehend by M. d'Ermancour's reply. " On " the contrary," ſaid he, interrupting him with great quickneſs, " I forbid " you ever to try to ſurpriſe her into a " confeſſion, of which I ſhould never " avail myſelf if it were not made freely. " Learn from me to conform yourſelf " exactly to my way of thinking. Zelia " ought to be as free and as much re- " ſpected here as if ſhe were in the midſt " of her family. Who could want deli- " cacy in her preſence, ſo as to forget " the principles of virtue, which ſhe ſo " well knows how to inſpire? I never " converſed with her without taſting " the pleaſures communicated by her " pure and innocent heart; I never " entered her apartment without feel- " ing that reſpect which a temple in- " ſpires us with; when I have ſome- " times had occaſion to approach her " bed, when ſhe has had ſome ſlight " illneſs which has confined her there " longer than uſual, I have experienced " a kind of trembling both of fear and

" pleaſure,

" pleaſure, which has put me in con-
" fuſion for ſome minutes. I have
" ſometimes found her aſleep on that
" bed, which then appeared like the
" throne of ſome divinity—I pleaſed
" myſelf with regarding her as ſuch in
" the illuſion of my heart. Has ſhe not
" the art of adorning every thing which
" ſurrounds her? ſaid I, caſting my
" eyes round her chamber, which her
" ſweet breath had perfumed. Her
" graces, her beautiful countenance,
" which beſpoke her amiable diſpoſi-
" tion and the ſerenity of her heart,
" are they not gifts from Heaven, which
" every human being muſt reſpect?
" I have then left her chamber with an
" inward ſatisfaction in my mind, which
" nothing can equal. I pleaſed myſelf
" with thinking that Zelia, in my hap-
" pier hours, would be pleaſed to hear
" me ſpeak of theſe delicate incidents,
" ſo flattering to a heart capable of feel-
" ing them. Why have I loſt this plea-
" ſure? Why cannot I any longer ſalute
" my Zelia but with a kind of ſhame,

" which

" which humbles me both in my own
" and in her opinion? You tell me ſhe is
" uneaſy at the change in my temper.
" If ſhe did but know the cauſe; if ſhe
" did but imagine that I was every day
" forming a ſcheme to abandon her;
" how guilty ſhould I appear in her
" eyes? But am I not enough ſo al-
" ready, ſince ſhe accuſes me of incon-
" ſtancy? Shall I leave her in this er-
" ror, which afflicts her heart and of-
" fends mine? How cruel is my ſitua-
" tion! Oh, my friend, you who appear
" concerned at my tears, go and leave
" me; I muſt be alone a moment to
" calm my mind."—I was no longer miſtreſs of myſelf, when I heard him ſigh and complain of his deſtiny. " It
" is I then," cried I aloud, " who af-
" flict this worthy friend whom I
" adore."—At the ſame time I made an effort to go out of the foreſt; but my agitation would not permit me to ſupport myſelf: M. d'Ermancour overtook me; I was aſhamed to appear before him; it was clear that I had diſcovered his

his ſecret; I ſhould never have ſuffered myſelf to do ſo, had my motives been leſs powerful: Notwithſtanding which, I could not bear the preſence of the moſt noble of men, without reproaching myſelf for an action unworthy both of himſelf and me. I entreated his pardon, and eaſily obtained it. This tender lover, who thought on his part that I had many reproaches to make him, could not imagine that I ſhould demand forgiveneſs. In ſhort, we agreed to have no more faults to excuſe on either ſide; and I conſented to give him my hand, by celebrating our marriage in the preſence of our friends. We then joined Jerome and Ninette, to tell them our reſolution; and the ceremony was performed the ſame evening, in the place where we had taken our firſt engagements, and which M. d'Ermancour had ſo well ornamented, that it might really be called the Temple of Love and Friendſhip. It was here we all aſſembled; a number of lamps lighted the avenue to it; a kind of little altar was raiſed in the middle;

middle; two ſmall deſks were placed before it, and a chair on each ſide for Jerome and Ninette. Struck with profound reſpect for this holy ceremony, and with gratitude to M. d'Ermancour, who ſo gracefully contributed to the decency which we had been able to obſerve in it, I could not reſtrain my tears. I knelt down on my knees, and prayed for ſome time, with my body bent down and my veil lowered, in order to conceal my tears. After performing this duty, I aroſe; M. d'Ermancour was by my ſide, gave me his hand as a pledge of his faith, and repeated aloud the words uſed in the marriage ceremony: I did the ſame; and without quitting this dear hand, I addreſſed the following prayer to the Supreme Being:

" Almighty God! look down with " a favourable eye on this union, which " has juſt now been celebrated in thy " preſence; pour down upon our heads " the nuptial bleſſing, which we can " only receive from thy goodneſs; pro- " tect us, and receive us into thy arms;

" preſerve

" preſerve to me a long time this ami-
" able huſband, whom my heart has
" made choice of; render me worthy of
" him, to the end that we may mutually
" praiſe thy goodneſs and glory. Pro-
" tect alſo this dear child," ſaid I, em-
bracing Ninette, who was bathed in
tears, " and this honeſt man alſo; re-
" ceive us all under thy protection, and
" give me grace always to merit the
" eſteem and attachment of theſe dear
" friends, who owe their misfortunes to
" me, and to whom I owe the moſt aſ-
" ſiduous attentions."

There was then a ſilence for ſome time, far more expreſſive than any thing we could have ſaid. M. d'Ermancour, who was much affected by my prayer, took me in his arms with tranſport; Ninette and Jerome each ſeized one of my hands, and bathed it with their tears. " My beloved wife, my " deareſt friend," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, as ſoon as he could recover himſelf enough to ſpeak, " from this hour guide " my heart as you pleaſe; but never let

" the

" the generoſity of yours impel you to " ſay, or even to think, that there are " perſons here who owe their misfor- " tunes to you: obſerve that, as we " do; they love us, and wiſh you to " enjoy, without any retroſpect to your- " ſelf, the pleaſure of contributing to " the happineſs of the three friends who " now preſs you in their arms."—Theſe words could not fail to excite my ſenſibility: my heart was ſo full, that I could only teſtify my joy and gratitude by my countenance, on which were painted all the emotions of my heart. But I could not long ſupport this degree of felicity: I diſengaged myſelf gently from their arms; and, by a ſign with my hand, I begged pardon of this tender huſband, whoſe affecting expreſſions had oppreſſed my heart. I found myſelf ready to faint. This amiable lover perceived it, and carried me in his arms to the middle of the walk, where he placed me at the foot of a tree, and ſat down by me. He then called Ninette and Jerome, in order to take off my thoughts from that which had

had ſo much oppreſſed me: he pretended to ſay, that our enthuſiaſm had made us forget to eat our ſuppers, and joked with great pleaſantry on the ſubject. I joined him in this innocent mirth, which gave eaſe to my heart. During ſupper, a pleaſing tranquillity animated all our hearts: M. d'Ermancour had never appeared ſo amiable: although he was naturally very lively, the leaſt conſtraint checked him; and that which I had impoſed on him, had for ſome time obſcured the cheerful gaiety of his heart, which his preſent happineſs perfectly reſtored to him: his mind, as well as his perſonal graces, diſcovered his content; but that timid modeſty, that tender delicacy, which are the ſupport as well as the charm of love, were well underſtood by M. d'Ermancour; his heart truly felt them; and he knew how to moderate his tranſports, and reſtrain his looks, when he feared to alarm me. His looks and his expreſſions penetrated my heart without offending me, and I yielded without difficulty to the ſoft im-

impreſſions of love which too violent a tranſport would have deſtroyed.

I ſhall never forget what I thought when I opened my eyes the next day, at the ſunſhine of a beautiful morning. This day was to me the happieſt of my life. This beloved huſband was by my ſide. I knew myſelf the author of his felicity. "He is mine!" ſaid I, obſerving him in a ſweet and calm repoſe; "I ſhall be the firſt object on whom "he will fix his eyes:—He will ſee in mine "the joy of a ſenſible heart, whoſe feli-"city is owing to him. Why did I for ſo "long a time defer our mutual happineſs? "I had offended my lover; I had made "him deſpair; I found him almoſt ready "to abandon me. Abandon me! Ah, "you never could have executed ſo "barbarous a ſcheme," ſaid I, preſſing him in my arms. This ſudden tranſport, which I could not reſtrain, awakened my huſband. "Is not this a dream?" ſaid he; "Is it you, my Zelia? Yes; I ſee it "is my affectionate, my beloved wife. "But why are theſe beauteous eyes filled "with tears? Is it love which occaſions

" them? Tell me, my dear friend, are " they a proof of that faith you have " ſworn to me? Have you any thing to re- " pent of?"—" No, my dear friend," ſaid I; " but I cannot, without horror, think " of the misfortunes to which I might " have been expoſed. And you, my " dear huſband—what would you have " done had you gone from me?"—" Do " not," ſaid he, " bring back to my mind " a circumſtance which wounds it ſo " much." Here we both ſhed tears—How expreſſive and affecting are theſe effuſions of the heart!—In ſpite of the ſhare my heart enjoyed of that ſatisfaction which my lover felt on our marriage; it was ſomewhat abated by a melancholy reflection which occurred to me: " Will he always think the ſame?" ſaid I. " Will he always be contented " with his ſituation? Will he not regret " thoſe ideal pleaſures, ſuch as titles, " and that kind of greatneſs which is " both the ambition and the torment of " mankind?" This reflection, which I had but ſlightly thought of at that time,

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frequently afterwards became the ſubject of our converſation. I had early learnt to reflect on all the events of human life. My misfortunes, in teaching me to bear them, had taught me to think and reflect. Alone, and abandoned, at an age when one neither thinks nor acts but by the advice of thoſe who ſurround us, I found myſelf in a vaſt Deſert, at my own liberty; without aſſiſtance, without hope, and without comfort. Let me look at ever ſo great a diſtance, either towards the ſea or the foreſt, I ſaw myſelf quite alone. All Nature appeared dead to me; I belonged to nothing on the whole extent of the globe. If this unhappy ſituation is compared with that which I was in ſince the arrival of M. d'Ermancour, it will be eaſily conceived how happy I muſt be: all my wiſhes were granted: but how could I flatter myſelf with being able to render my huſband's ſituation as pleaſant as my own? Could I ſupply the place of every one whom he had abandoned for me? Parents whom he loved and reſpected; of an honourable family, and

fortune conſiderable enough to procure him an advantageous match in Paris. Join to all theſe, a fine perſon, a cultivated underſtanding, and agreeable talents, and you will yet be ignorant of half the eſtimable qualities of this dear companion of my misfortunes. Above all other things, I wiſh to deſcribe his noble and elevated mind; for unleſs that were known, as I knew it, the value of the ſacrifice he made me can never be aſcertained. Often have I ſaid, "What "a pity it is, that ſociety ſhould be de- "prived of a man ſo uſeful to it, and "that he alſo ſhould be for ever de- "prived of the charms which ſociety "would have had for him! What be- "nefit might he not have afforded to "mankind?" I reproached myſelf with having robbed his dependants of a maſter, a friend, and a protector, as he would have been to all thoſe who ſurrounded him. As to himſelf, he only regretted the loſs of his parents and friends; but the neceſſity to which we were compelled for many years, ſoon appeared

peared to M. d'Ermancour a favour from Heaven, which had ſeparated him from a world full of rocks, and placed him, to his heart's content, in an agreeable though a deſolate place, with a companion who was dearer to him than all the world. I repeat his own expreſſions; it was in this manner he conſoled me whenever I ſhewed any concern at ſeeing him reduced to a ſtate ſo unworthy of him. I never ſaw him employed in hard and painful labour, without my heart being ready to break: every drop of ſweat which fell from his brow, made me ſhed tears: I trembled for a health ſo dear to me, and I always thought him too weak in conſtitution to ſupport ſuch fatiguing exerciſes. But at the end of a few years he acquired a robuſt ſtate of health, very different from what he had at the beginning of his labours in the Deſert. His ſtrength could not be known but by its effects; I was often aſtoniſhed to ſee what my own reſolution and neceſſity could oblige me to do, before M. d'Ermancour's arrival; and am convinced,

that people have more ſtrength, underſtanding, reſolution, and even talents, than they commonly make uſe of. It would occaſion much ſurpriſe could every thing be ſeen that we did, to procure both neceſſaries and conveniences in our habitation: we had all kinds of furniture in profuſion, and the houſe was infinitely improved by the ground about it being cleared, and plantations made, by my huſband and Jerome, to ornament the outſide.

But let us return to the day after my marriage, which was celebrated with more cheerfulneſs and true pleaſure than if we had been in the world, in the midſt of pomp and riches.

It was not in a magnificent palace, but in the midſt of a beautiful plantation, and under the ſhade of ſome young trees planted by M. d'Ermancour, that we made our wedding feaſt. The ſinging of little birds of all kinds, ſerved us inſtead of concerts, which many times are performed unattended to by the generality of young couples, who are too often ſacri-

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ficed to intereſt and ambition. This reflection, which I communicated to M. d'Ermancour, rendered our country repaſt ſtill more delightful. We congratulated ourſelves in having eſcaped a diſagreeable cuſtom, which luxury has authoriſed, and vanity makes almoſt neceſſary, in thoſe perſons who diſpute with others for rank.

M. d'Ermancour perfectly agreed with me in this matter. But Ninette, who had not the ſame reaſons for enjoying it, was tired with hearing us. She interrupted M. d'Ermancour, who was crying out in a moment of enthuſiaſm—"All you "great people of the world, come "here and learn to be happy! It is here "you will find true felicity, which you "are conſtantly in ſearch of, and can "never find!"—"Well," ſaid Ninette, getting up from table with an air of diſcontent, "if what you ſay were true, we "ſhould not ſee foreſts ſo deſerted as they "are. What, do not men, who are ſo "ſenſible, and ſo enlightened, know "what is beſt for them?"—"No, Ma-

" demoiſelle," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, with his uſual politeneſs; " theſe men " whom you think ſo learned, do not " know how to be happy; nor can they " be ſo; they depart too far from the " paths of nature; they are too much po- " liſhed."—" Too much poliſhed!" ſaid ſhe. " I cannot conceive how a perfec- " tion can be hurtful."—" I will ex- " plain that to you another time," ſaid M. d'Ermancour; " as what I ſhall have " to tell you is too ſerious for the feaſt " which we are this day celebrating. " Let us go to the foreſt; I fancy Jerome " is there preparing ſome agreeable ſur- " priſe for us."

There was no occaſion to ſay more, in order to excite the curioſity of Ninette. She aſked M. d'Ermancour a thouſand queſtions, to which he gave her evaſive anſwers, that ſhe might not gueſs the place to which we were going, and it was not till near night that he conducted us there.

The rock from which I would have thrown myſelf into the ſea, when I thought my

my lover had abandoned me, may eaſily be remembered. From that unfortunate day I could not ſee this place without trembling. I therefore carefully avoided every path which led to it, though the banks on that ſide the ſea were the moſt agreeable in the whole iſland. M. d'Ermancour concerned himſelf much more with my happineſs than his own. He and Jerome had undertaken to make ſuch an alteration in this place, which I ſo much diſliked, that I ſhould never be able to recollect the fatal idea which made me forſake it. They cut down ſeveral trees, opened new paths, and raiſed paliſadoes on the ſea-ſide, to conceal the view of it. All this painful labour did not diſcourage them. It was not, however, quite finiſhed at the time I am ſpeaking of, but the circumſtances determined them to diſcover the ſecret.

They made us paſs through a very obſcure road to arrive at this enchanted place; enchanted I call it, for, at the firſt view, I thought I ſaw decorations for an opera. Let any one figure to themſelves,

ſelves, in the midſt of a gloomy foreſt, a mount about twelve feet high, covered with fine turf, formed into ſteps leading to an amphitheatre, on which ſtood a platform adorned with flowers and verdure. This little mount was ſurrounded by lattice-work, the deſign of which was, to diſcover M. d'Ermancour's name and mine, formed in cyphers, with lamps of different colours, which were lighted and hung up for that purpoſe.

The dazzling light which reflected among the trees, before I could diſcover the deſign, appeared to me at the firſt view like a dreadful fire, which ſeemed as if it would conſume the foreſt in a few minutes. I ſtopped, and ſcreamed out with ſurpriſe and terror: but M. d'Ermancour was ſo compoſed, and had ſuch an air of ſatisfaction, that I ſoon recovered. When I came to the foot of the mountain, which I no longer took for that which had been ſo fatal to me, I thought of proſtrating myſelf at it. A ſenſation of reſpect and admiration kept me for ſome minutes almoſt motionleſs.

So

So unexpected a ſight, in a place ſo deſert as this, ſeemed to be like enchantment. "What is this I ſee?" ſaid I to this tender huſband, who enjoyed my amazement. "Is this a deception, or is "it the work of a fairy?"—"It is your "own," ſaid he, taking me by the hand, to lead me up the ſteps to the throne, which I ſcarce dared to approach. "It "is at the top of this little edifice that "you will recollect your own work."

Here I found another ſubject of admiration and pleaſure: from the top of this mount I could plainly ſee the temple of Love and Friendſhip, by means of lamps which were hung on the trees in the avenue leading to it. I then underſtood in an inſtant what my amiable huſband had juſt told me, and I threw myſelf into his arms.—"Now," ſaid he, "you ſee "your own work; that charming ſpot, "where by indiſſoluble ties you fixed "my happineſs. Obſerve how you have "ſpread gaiety around you; look and "enjoy the pleaſures which you have

" procured me. See alſo, under your " feet, that frightful mountain which " you ſo much dreaded to approach, " and which now appears to you ſo plea- " ſant. It is the divinity of this foreſt " who has produced theſe metamor- " phoſes. It is my lovely Zelia, who, " more ingenious than a fairy, can with- " out art or deception adorn nature, and " diffuſe joy and happineſs around her."

Love, expreſſed in ſo delicate a manner, did not permit me to give him any other anſwer than tears, which ſilently expreſſed my gratitude. But what pleaſure did I not feel when ſeated by my huſband under a green canopy, which he had himſelf ornamented with foliage and flowers, and ſurrounded by friends, who only ſeemed employed to give me pleaſure. I was incapable of expreſſing my gratitude—I thanked Jerome—I embraced Ninette and M. d'Ermancour by turns; and I entreated the former to join with me in endeavouring to acquit me of the obligations which I owed to this amiable

amiable huſband, whom I feared I ſhould never be able to render as happy as he had made me.

We paſſed a good part of the night in this enchanting place, our ſupper being brought thither. And after this day we conſtantly ſupped there three or four times a week, till my advanced pregnancy would not permit me to go ſo far.

But though we changed the object of our pleaſures, they were not leſs lively nor leſs agreeable. We were now altogether employed in preparing for the new being which was ſoon to increaſe the number of our ſociety. To people who live in the world, the birth of a child frequently embarraſſes a young couple who are not very rich, and is irkſome to women whoſe only pleaſure conſiſts in making a figure at public entertainments. But to a pair of lovers whoſe hearts are devoted to each other before their marriage, it is an additional tie and a precious pledge, which every inſtant calls to mind their ſacred engagements.

It

It was ſtill more ſo to M. d'Ermancour and me; it was ſupreme felicity. We looked forward to the delight of ſeeing this little creature, and laviſhing our careſſes on it, and ſeeing it ſmile on us, while it called us by the dear names of father and mother. In ſhort, it was to us an increaſe of happineſs; and it will be eaſily imagined that the infant I gave birth to at the end of nine months, was received with the greateſt joy.

I was the more pleaſed to find it a boy, as M. d'Ermancour much wiſhed it. "It is a ſon, my dear Zelia," ſaid he, bringing it to me in his arms; "he will "be your friend and your ſupport if you "ſhould outlive me; he will love you as "his father."

This prediction was realized beyond our hopes; this child, dear to our hearts, cauſed us afterwards the greateſt happineſs.

I very ſoon recovered my health and ſtrength, becauſe I ſuckled my child, and was happy and contented, and carefully attended to by M. d'Ermancour, Ninette,

nette, and Jerome; from all of whom I received the greateſt marks of kindneſs, and who only ſeemed to live for my ſake. My grateful heart was ſcarce able to teſtify the pleaſure I received from them. How ſenſibly did I feel the attachment they ſhewed me, and the intimate union that reigned among us! Never did a ſhadow of a cloud point out the ſmalleſt diſcontent. Every night we parted with the ſame regret; and every morning met again with the ſame pleaſure. Hunting, walking, and cultivating the ground and garden, were M. d'Ermancour's uſual employments. As to myſelf, I gave almoſt all my time to the education of my children. I was brought to-bed of a girl about eighteen months after the birth of my boy: I nurſed her in the ſame manner as her brother, and ſhe afforded me the ſame ſatisfaction: both together were the delight of all the family; we every one regarded each other. As good parents, there was no diſtinction between us but that which ſentiment inſpired: it was gratitude, attachment, love, and reciprocal

procal duties, by which our actions were regulated. No happineſs appeared more certain or more durable than mine:—I was adored by the moſt amiable of men, beloved and reſpected by all my family. I ſaw my children grow and improve daily; their fond father never quitted them but with regret, to attend his different occupations. When he went out in ſearch of game, he always appointed a place of rendezvous, where he invited us to come and meet him. How pleaſing to ſee the joy and the eagerneſs which we all teſtified on ſeeing him again, after an abſence of ſome hours. He was quite delighted with the thoughts of affording us ſo much pleaſure.

He often uſed to ſtop at a little diſtance from the place where we were ſitting, to contemplate for ſome minutes on ſo intereſting a groupe.

"See," ſaid he, one day to his faithful Jerome, who accompanied him, "ſee "this beautiful picture which contains "all my joy and felicity: look at that "adorable mother, how tenderly ſhe "ſmiles

" ſmiles while playing with her infants.
" See how they careſs her in their turns,
" and with what inimitable grace the
" lovely Ninette partakes of and adds
" to the pleaſures of this innocent *ba-*
" *dinage*. All theſe hearts are mine; they
" all, on ſeeing me again, ſhew the moſt
" lively joy and ſatisfaction! Can you
" imagine there are any more real or
" more enchanting pleaſures?—But you,
" who doubtleſs partake of them, why
" do you ſeem to be ſo little intereſted
" at what I am ſaying? Why—"—" Ah,
" Sir," ſaid Jerome, " ſhall I venture
" to tell you? It is, that I fear theſe
" pleaſures, which form your preſent fe-
" licity, will not laſt."—" How! What
" is it you ſay? What is it can happen
" to obſtruct my happineſs? Explain
" yourſelf, my friend, and leave me no
" longer in this cruel ſuſpenſe."—" Will
" you, Sir," ſaid Jerome, " forgive me
" for an apprehenſion which may, per-
" haps, be ill grounded? How ſhall I
" tell you what I have already reproach-
" ed myſelf for having even thought
" of?

" of? No, do not aſk me, allow me to " forget my unjuſt ſuſpicions; it was " my attachment to you, and to your " Lady and family, which made me " fear that which perhaps may never " happen."

" Tell me inſtantly," ſaid M. d'Ermancour; " for I feel much more in my " preſent ſtate of mind, than I can do " on any thing you have to tell me.— " Am I likely to loſe my wife, my chil- " dren, or Ninette?"—" No, Sir; it is a " misfortune of another nature which I " apprehend for you and for us all. " You may prevent it. I will explain " myſelf, Sir, ſince I have gone ſo far. " Is not that which now conſtitutes our " felicity, the perfect union which reigns " amongſt us? Is it not our mutual at- " tachment to each other, which ſup- " ports that delightful uniformity? Sup- " poſe any thing ſhould happen to diſ- " turb this harmony!—This is the miſ- fortune which I am in dread of."

" My dear friend," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, " what can I do to prevent ſuch

" a cruel

" a cruel event? But who could ever " disturb that intimate union which is " among us? Zelia will never ceaſe to " love me. I am ſo ſure of her affection, " that I ſhould have no fear of loſing it " even were we to live in the moſt cor- " rupt ſociety. I ſhall always love my " children equally; there will never be " any jealouſy between them; they will " love you as I do, and I am certain you " will always be their friend. Who, " then, can occaſion any difference be- " tween us?"

" Ah, Sir," ſaid Jerome, " it is not " you; it is not my Lady, nor your chil- " dren; but the charming Ninette, the " only one you have not mentioned. " Why was ſhe left out of the liſt? Is " ſhe then of ſo little conſequence?"— " Can you think it?" ſaid M. d'Er- mancour. " No, my dear maſter," re- plied Jerome, " I think nothing, but I " fear—She is ſo handſome, ſo ele- " gantly formed, has ſo many graces, ſo " enchanting an air, is of manners ſo " gentle, ſo polite, ſo affectionate, and

" at

" at the ſame time only ſixteen years of " age."——" Very well," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, " all this is very true; I ſee " her exactly in the light you have de- " ſcribed her; but what has ſhe to do " with your fears? Can you be ſo un- " juſt as to ſuſpect me? My good friend, " take care not to offend the delicacy of " my heart; it has nothing to reproach " itſelf with, nor ever will, on this ſub- " ject; be certain of it. I only beg of " you never to think of this converſation " again; the idea of it alone hurts my " ſenſibility."

It may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that I was not informed of all theſe particulars till long after. I had not the ſmalleſt uneaſineſs or ſuſpicion of any ſuch thing: but after this converſation M. d'Ermancour was not eaſy. The expreſſions of Jerome, which had convinced him of his ſuſpicions, could not avoid giving him an air of conſtraint and embarraſſment with Ninette. I might have remarked it the moment he joined us again. He received her coldly when ſhe went, accord-

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ing to cuſtom, to throw herſelf into his arms, and inſtantly diſengaged himſelf to fly to me. And Jerome told me afterwards, that he had trembled at it, leſt it ſhould have occaſioned ſome diſagreeable conſequences.

For my part, who knew nothing of what had paſſed, I was much ſurpriſed to ſee Ninette in tears, at a time when I was calling upon her to obſerve my huſband's tenderneſs to his children. She went away without making any reply, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw I obſerved her. I then addreſſed myſelf to M. d'Ermancour and Jerome, but they neither of them could tell me what was the matter with her. I went out, and found her in a retired part of the foreſt, when, on ſeeing me, her tears burſt out again.

"From whence proceed theſe tears, my "dear Ninette?" ſaid I. "If any thing "has vexed you, why did you not come "and repoſe your griefs in my boſom, "inſtead of flying from me?"—"Ah, "mamma, if I had told you, you could "only have been concerned for me. It

"is

" is your husband who afflicts me; he
" no longer loves me; he even hates me.
" If you had seen how rudely he repulsed
" me when I ran to embrace him——I
" must surely be a very bad creature,
" since he treats me so ill, he who is so
" good himself: he would not be guilty
" of injustice, consequently I must be in
" fault.—But what fault? Would it not
" have been better to let me know it be-
" fore he punished me for it?"—" You
" are in the right, my dear Ninette; go
" to him, and seek for an explanation;
" I am sure it is only owing to some mis-
" understanding between you."

I would have led her to him, but she refused, under pretence of not letting him see her in tears.

I told M. d'Ermancour all that had passed; his reply was, that she was only a child, and had taken it into her head that he was angry with her. " It is " nothing else, I assure you," said he; and then changed the conversation.

In the evening, when we were all together, I engaged my husband to make her mind

mind eaſy, and I thought no more about it. I ſaw them romp together as uſual, playing tricks, and then ſquabbling, and making it up again. I often joined them in theſe little amuſements, which appeared to me, and really were, very innocent ones. But Jerome, who had more experience than I had, and who feared all that afterwards happened, frequently watched them, and when he found they were tête-à-tête, he always went and made a third with them. Had I known it I ſhould have prevented it, even at the hazard of cauſing miſchief; for I would not for the world have been guilty of ſuch a conduct: I ſhould have looked upon it as beneath me, and as an affront to the moſt amiable of men. But Jerome, who had for ſo many years directed his maſter, thought he had ſtill a right to watch over his actions. About two or three months after the converſation between M. d'Ermancour and Jerome in the foreſt, he overheard them talking in the garden, where I had left them to go and take care of my children. What paſſed will diſcover

cover the noble and generous ſentiments of my huſband. The innocent and virtuous Ninette, led on by a paſſion of which ſhe was ignorant, ſpoke thus to M. d'Ermancour:

" Why, my dear Sir, do you wiſh to
" return home? Let us ſtay here; the
" weather is ſo fine. You do not love to
" be alone with me; I ſee it plainly, you
" are weary of me; yet how could that be
" if you loved me, as you ſay you do? I
" cannot comprehend it; pray explain it
" to me; we ſhall have time enough;
" mamma will not come back very
" ſoon. Between ourſelves, ſhe ſome-
" times diſtreſſes me; I am not ſo free
" with you when ſhe is by; beſides you
" are then always taken up with looking
" at her, and praiſing every thing ſhe
" does. How tenderly you embrace her!
" It ſeems to me that you never embrace
" me with ſo much tenderneſs.——Oh,
" no, you do not love me as I love you.
" You know not how unhappy I have
" been ever ſince you repulſed me ſo
" roughly in the foreſt; I have not had
" a cheer-

" a cheerful moment ſince; but you " have never once aſked me what " made me ſo grave! No; you never " gave yourſelf any trouble about me. " You are perhaps ſorry that I love " you; but if it is ſo, do not ſay " ſo, do not ever tell me ſo."— " My charming girl," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, taking her in his arms, " do " not accuſe me of indifference;" and after preſſing her to his boſom, he went a few paces from her, to hide his concern as well as his tears, which love and conſcious ſhame had extorted from him. Ninette, in deſpair at having afflicted him, threw herſelf at his feet to intreat pardon.— " Leave me, my kind and " tender friend," ſaid he, gently puſhing her away with his hand; " leave me: " I only love you too well."—" Too " well!" ſaid ſhe: " Alas! I muſt then " be very deſpicable, if you are afraid " of loving me. What do you reproach " yourſelf with? The affection, or rather " the pity which I have inſpired you " with?"—" Yes, too amiable Ninette, " I do reproach myſelf with the ſenti-

" ments you have inſpired me with. If " you knew what it has coſt me, alas! " you would pity me for loving you too " well, my dear girl, inſtead of accuſing " me of indifference."—" Oh, my dear " Sir, how unhappy do you make me!"

Juſt at this time I arrived, and M. d'Ermancour went haſtily out of the garden, after having forbid Ninette to ſay any thing to me of what had paſſed. She was ſeated on a bank, leaning her head on her hands. I thought ſhe was aſleep, and went up to her to aſſure myſelf of it.— " Mamma," ſaid ſhe, " I am not aſleep, " but I have a terrible headach."— " Indeed, my dear," ſaid I, looking at her, and touching her forehead, " you " are very red and feveriſh; come, let " us go in-doors. Where is my huſ- " band? I thought he was here."— " Oh, mamma! go quickly and ſee for " him, and recover his ſpirits."—" Re- " cover his ſpirits! Upon what? Ah, " my God, I know not what you mean!" " —With regard to my illneſs," ſaid ſhe, " I am afraid he thinks me worſe " than I really am."—" What, then,

" did

" did he leave you ſo ill?—" Oh yes," replied ſhe, " very ill indeed! But do " not make yourſelf uneaſy, mamma; " I ſhall be quite well to-morrow after " a night's reſt: allow me to go to " bed." Saying which, ſhe went directly to her chamber.

As M. d'Ermancour was not come back, I went in ſearch of him, and found him at a little diſtance from the houſe. He was walking at a great pace, and ſeemed much agitated. He even appeared confuſed at ſeeing me. I then recollected what Ninette had ſaid, and I feared he had obſerved ſomething dangerous in her illneſs. I endeavoured to make him eaſy on that head; but I was aſtoniſhed to hear him ſay that ſhe was not ill when he left her. " What!" ſaid I, " did ſhe not tell you ſhe had " a violent headach?" — " No," ſaid he; " I left her very well." — Theſe ſeeming contradictions, which I could not underſtand, made me very uneaſy in my turn; but I would not aſk my huſband any more queſtions, as I ſaw plainly he had no deſire to explain himſelf.

The next day he did not go into Ninette's chamber to enquire after her health; I reproved him for it, and ſaid I thought ſhe was really ill, and had a fever. He went to her directly, and I followed him. As ſoon as ſhe ſaw us both approach her bed, ſhe burſt into tears, and threw herſelf into our arms. I looked at M. d'Ermancour, to mark to him my aſtoniſhment; but he appeared himſelf ſo much affected, that he ſuddenly quitted the room without ſaying a word.—Let any one judge of my ſituation: I remained pale and trembling for ſome time; I could not find out the cauſe of their grief, which had ſo much affected me. At length I ſaid to Ninette, "What can it be which cauſes "this uneaſineſs to you and M. d'Er-"mancour?" — Tears and ſighs were the only anſwer I could obtain. Jerome came in: he had been talking with his maſter, and adviſed me to go to him. I went with trembling feet, and an agitated heart. "Come, my deareſt friend," ſaid M. d'Ermancour; "come and give

"comfort

" comfort to a heart where you always " reign triumphant, in ſpite of the ef- " forts of a beginning paſſion. Pardon " me, my good and lovely Zelia! par- " don me! I would not now kneel at " your feet, were I not ſtill worthy of all " your tenderneſs."—I embraced him, and we both wept a long time before we were able to ſpeak. At length this ami- able huſband broke ſilence. " My dear " Zelia," ſaid he, " you have then par- " doned me all without knowing my " offence: I ſee it by the proofs of love " you have given me. But have I yet " deſerved your forgiveneſs which you " ſo generouſly have granted me? Com- " plete it then, by promiſing to aſſiſt " me in entirely conquering a weakneſs " I have to reproach myſelf with, but " which I ſhould ſtill more fear the ef- " fects of, were you to abandon me to " myſelf. Guide alſo, and conſole the " innocent creature who is the cauſe of " it. I have already charged Jerome " to diſpoſe her to conduct herſelf in a " proper manner towards me."—" Oh,

" my dear husband," said I, " how " noble are you for thus accusing your- " self of weakness; I shall never be able " to deserve you; I can never give such " convincing proofs of my love and con- " fidence, as you have now given me." —" My dear Zelia, I am far, very far " from those perfections which I know " you possess. Who is it can equal you " in virtue?"—" It is only your affec- " tion for me which makes you of that " opinion," said I. " But let us go, my " dear friend, let us go and find this " good and charming Ninette, who will " from this time become more dear than " ever to me."

Jerome, who had continued with Ninette during my absence, had suffered her to remain weeping for a long time without saying any thing to her, till at length, seeing her a little more composed, he said, " Mademoiselle, I in- " treat you will listen to me; you have " always treated me with great kind- " ness; I have sometimes taken the " liberty to give you some advice, which

" you

" you have followed; that which I have
" to give you at this time is of infinitely
" more conſequence than any other, if
" you will attend to me."—" Ah, my
" dear Jerome, I am undone. Your
" maſter!—I ſhall not know him again
" to be the ſame perſon. Alas! how
" changed is he in his behaviour to me!
" He has treated me with indifference, and
" even with coldneſs, for ſome time paſt;
" he who is ſo kind and good to every
" one. What can I have done? If you
" could but tell me, if I did but know
" why he ſhuns me, why he neglects
" me, why he is afraid to love me—"
" Madam," ſaid Jerome, " theſe are
" very delicate queſtions: I will, how-
" ever, anſwer them, ſince you deſire
" it. You have ſo much good ſenſe,
" that you will underſtand me, ſhould
" I even expreſs myſelf badly."—" Oh,
" tell me," ſaid ſhe, " my dear Je-
" rome, tell me what I muſt do to be
" beloved as I was by this charming
" man whom I adore!"—" It muſt not
" be ſo, my dear madam: he muſt not be

" adored, nor muſt you aſk him to love
" you more than is proper for him to
" do: you ought to be very prudent.
" You will pleaſe to attend to me. You
" were witneſs to the engagements he
" entered into with your mamma; but
" have you reflected on theſe engage-
" ments? let me inform you of them. He
" promiſed her, when he married her,
" an inviolable fidelity; that is, he pro-
" miſed to love her only, and that he
" would never entertain for any other
" perſon, either tenderneſs, affection,
" or that attachment which he had en-
" gaged to preſerve eternally for her.
" After this, madam, you will perfectly
" underſtand, that if you wiſh him to
" love you as much as he does his wife,
" you will make him a wicked and a
" perjured man, ſince he would break
" his word, and if ſo, would make your
" mamma miſerable, who would find
" herſelf deceived and betrayed by all
" thoſe who were moſt dear to her in
" the world." — " Enough, enough,
" Jerome," ſaid ſhe, ſtopping his mouth

with

with her hand; "I have no deſire to "hear any more." And after a ſhort ſilence, "What a fatal diſcovery have "I now made! What! ſhould I have "made unhappy this adored woman, "who brought me up, loved me, and "cheriſhed me, as if I had been her "own child! I ſhould have deceived her "and betrayed her! Oh, I never can be "guilty of this vile ingratitude." She preſently after got up, as ſoon as Jerome had left her. On our return, we found her ſitting before the door, with one of my babies in her lap. I embraced her, and enquired after her health, without any affectation. "O, mamma, I am "cured, quite cured, I aſſure you." She could not ſay this without diſcovering by her eyes the uneaſineſs of her mind; but I did not let her ſee I obſerved it.

I then went into the houſe, in order, as we had agreed, to let M. d'Ermancour talk a little with her. He had the politeneſs to repeat their converſation to me afterwards. "She is a charming "girl," ſaid he, "and worthy all that

" affection you have for her. I wiſh
" you could have heard her; for I can
" never do juſtice to her expreſſions.
" She no longer thinks of any thing but
" the danger ſhe was in of making all
" her friends miſerable. ' O Sir,'
" ſaid ſhe to me, ' Jerome has wounded
" my heart, while he enlightened it;
" but I forgive him—I forgive him!'
" ſaid ſhe; ' that is not what I wiſh to
" ſay,' caſting down her eyes; ' on
" the contrary, I ought to be very
" grateful to him. You had great rea-
" ſon to be afraid of loving me. Ah!
" never love me at all, ſince it is a
" crime:' And ſhe then burſt into tears.
" ' My dear Ninette,' ſaid I, taking her
" hand, ' why do you forbid me to love
" you? Why do you think it would be
" a crime to love you?' She withdrew
" her hand, but ſaid nothing. I added,
" that I might love her notwithſtanding
" my engagements with Zelia; that the
" eternal friendſhip I ſhould have for
" her, would never be contrary to my
" promiſes; and that this ſentiment
" would

" would rather cement our union, and
" give me a title to your regard, who
" loved her as if ſhe were her own
" child.—' My good God,' ſaid ſhe,
" raiſing her eyes to heaven, ' make me
" yet worthy of this adorable mother,
" to whom I owe more than life; grant
" that I may never give her one mo-
" ment's pain. And you, her moſt ami-
" able huſband, help me ſo to conduct
" myſelf towards her, that ſhe may never
" ſuſpect that which I dare not without
" bluſhing confeſs even to myſelf. Alas!
" I long to go to her; and at the ſame
" time I feel ſomething in my heart
" which prevents me from following
" her. How ſhall I ſupport her looks,
" her careſſes, of which I am no longer
" worthy. I have offended her, griev-
" ouſly offended her!'—' Do not think
" ſo, my dear Ninette; you have not,
" nor ever will offend her: your heart
" is as pure as her own; ſhe thinks ſo
" herſelf, and will never doubt it. She
" would be much more offended, if ſhe
" thought you was afraid to ſee her.'—

" ' I muſt be alone;' ſaid ſhe, ' do you " return :' And ſhe then went into the " foreſt."

She had been gone about two hours, when I propoſed to M. d'Ermancour to go with all our family to ſee for her. As ſoon as ſhe ſaw us, ſhe came with an air of eagerneſs to join us; ſhe tenderly embraced me without looking at me; I held her in my arms ſome minutes, telling her how much we all wanted her during her ſhort abſence. Jerome told her, that her little Cherlot had been every where to ſeek his god-mamma. Cherlot was the name of my ſon, which was given him after my huſband's father; and we called Ninette his god-mother, becauſe ſhe gave him the name of Lolot, which nickname we had all adopted as more ſuitable to the gentility and archneſs of the child. She embraced him tenderly, having always been fonder of him than his ſiſter, who was called Zelinette by my huſband, becauſe, he ſaid, ſhe was my picture in miniature. In a ſhort time we all returned to the houſe,

houſe, teſtifying by every means in our power our friendſhip to Ninette. Theſe attentions ſeemed to embarraſs her, though ſhe returned them with great gratitude; but it was not with that air of ſenſibility, accompanied by her uſual ſmiles. She had no longer that lively cheerfulneſs, which is ſo pleaſing a mark of innocence and youth. She grew melancholy and abſent when left to herſelf; and whatever we did to draw her from that ſituation, ſeemed to oppreſs her. We then left her alone. She would frequently walk two or three hours in the foreſt, and not return to the houſe till ſhe was very much tired: her fatigue then gave her a pretence to retire to her chamber; and ſhe ſeldom came out of it but at meal times. So great an alteration in a young perſon who for many years had been the delight of the whole family, afflicted us all very much. As to myſelf, I was quite miſerable about it, yet I dared not tell M. d'Ermancour what I thought; nor did he communicate to me the concern which he felt on the occaſion:

caſion: and the conſtraint we were under, made us often affect a gaiety which we had not, and which became more and more painful to us every day. To take himſelf from a ſituation ſo diſtreſſing, my huſband ſpent great part of his time in hunting with Jerome, and I remained at home with my children. What a difference was there in this way of life, though it is common all over the world, to that in which we had lived, reciprocally ſeeking each other's ſociety, and never enjoying ourſelves but when all met together!

At length, being tired with the manner in which we all conducted ourſelves with reſpect to Ninette, who did not try to get the better of her paſſion, but on the contrary accuſtomed herſelf always to be alone, given up to her melancholy reflections, which made her much worſe; I took upon myſelf to reprove her for it, though with the utmoſt tenderneſs I could poſſibly make uſe of. I went one day to find her in her diſtant and ſolitary walks; ſhe was ſitting under a tree,

a tree, with pen, ink, and paper in her lap; as ſhe was deeply engaged in writing, I came cloſe to her before ſhe perceived me; ſhe ſcreamed out with ſurpriſe and terror on ſeeing me, and put the paper into her boſom to conceal what ſhe had been writing: "I came to look "for you, my dear," ſaid I, without taking the leaſt notice of her agitation, or of the paper ſhe had concealed ſo haſtily; "I cannot live ſo long without "ſeeing you; you will make me un-"happy if you continue always to love "ſolitude ſo much."—"Ah, mamma, "how good you are!" ſaid ſhe, caſting her fine languiſhing eyes on me; "I "am not worthy the tenderneſs you "ſhew me; I can never acquit myſelf "of the obligations I owe you. Yet "I am not ungrateful; do not ſuppoſe "I am; indeed my heart is affected with "the deepeſt gratitude, and feels every "thing you have done for me. But "do not tell me I make you unhappy; "on the contrary, pity me for not being "able to add to your felicity, or rather

"for

"for having troubled it."—She then ſhed a torrent of tears, which not all I could ſay, nor all my aſſurances of affection, could put a ſtop to. When ſhe grew more compoſed, I propoſed returning home; and from this day ſhe appeared rather more at her eaſe: ſometimes ſhe was even brought to ſmile; and ſhe did not affect to walk ſo much alone. I conceived great hopes from this apparent tranquillity; and I know not whether we might not have ſucceeded in reſtoring her entirely to her former happineſs, but for the unfortunate adventure which I am going to relate.

M. d'Ermancour and Jerome had one day been wandering about in the foreſt in purſuit of a ſtrange animal which they had never before ſeen. The deſire of knowing what it was, had carried them much farther than they intended without their knowledge. Night ſurpriſed them on the top of a high mountain, where they were obliged to wait for the return of day, and it was with great difficulty they found their way home. We paſſed the night

night in the moſt dreadful uncertainty, without daring, either Ninette or myſelf, to mention the ſhocking ideas which entered our imaginations. As ſoon as day-light appeared, we went to the foreſt in ſearch of them; and in hopes of being able to diſcover them the ſooner, we went up to the little Belvidere, which my huſband had conſtructed to do honour to our wedding-day; but we were a long time there without diſcovering any thing. At length they replied to our calls. What a happy ſenſation was it to me when I heard a voice ſo dear to my heart!—I embraced Ninette, who as well as myſelf ſhed tears of love and joy! We mutually congratulated each other, but it was only by actions, for neither of us could ſpeak.

As ſoon as they came near we went down the hill to meet them, and I ran to M. d'Ermancour, but I was ſo much agitated that I found myſelf ready to faint in his arms. He was himſelf ſo fatigued and ſo uneaſy, that he was almoſt as near fainting as I was; but he ſoon recovered,

recovered, when he ſaw me by degrees reſtored to myſelf.

" My lovely Ninette," ſaid he afterwards to this amiable girl, after embracing her tenderly, " you will one day or " other tell me yours and my dear Ze- " lia's concern for our abſence. Aſk " Jerome how much I have pitied you; " for, indeed, both of you are very dear " to me." At this exclamation, which gave me ſo much joy, I put one arm round Ninette's waiſt, and the other round M. d'Ermancour, drawing him towards us. He preſſed us both with tranſport, and congratulated himſelf on having recovered all that was moſt dear to him on earth. He then enquired for his dear children; they preſently came to him with Jerome, who had fetched them from a little diſtance where they were playing, knowing it would give his maſter ſo much pleaſure to ſee them. This was to me a ſtill more agreeable ſcene, to ſee and ſhare with their fond father the delight he felt when he took them in his arms and embraced them, firſt one and then

then the other, to the joy of them both, who cried out with tranſports of pleaſure. One would have thought, to have ſeen their eagerneſs and raptures, that theſe little innocents had feared, like us, they ſhould be deprived of this good parent, ſo neceſſary to their future happineſs. My boy was then about five years old, and Zelinette rather more than three. Although bred in a deſert, they were both lovely babies; Lolot was tall of his age, well made, and had fine features, and a noble countenance like his father, of whom he was a perfect reſemblance. As to Zelinette, ſhe was like a little doll; formed by the Graces, her perſon and features were altogether ſo beautiful, that it was impoſſible for any thing to be more perfect; and ſhe loſt none of her charms in growing up to a maturer age. M. d'Ermancour and Jerome gave us an account, when we returned to the houſe, of an important diſcovery which they had made upon the mountain where they had paſſed the night.

" Our

"Our misfortune," ſaid my huſband, "has given us an opportunity of finding out that we have neighbours who "live on the north ſide of the mountain. "We perceived the light of fires in different places, and we even thought "we heard the ſound of human voices, "which ſeemed to come from a place "where we obſerved the greateſt light." This account rather alarmed me, and I aſked a thouſand queſtions as to the kind of people who inhabited this ſpot.

"They are probably Europeans," ſaid M. d'Ermancour, "for theſe iſlands are "chiefly conquered by ſuch. If there are "ſtill any ſavages, they muſt be in ſmall "numbers, and are moſt likely retired "into the inmoſt part of the country."

Ninette, who had heard M. d'Ermancour without ſaying a word, now mixed in the converſation, and appeared greatly intereſted in it, when ſhe underſtood there were people in our neighbourhood who reſembled us, and lived in the ſame manner. "This diſcovery," ſaid ſhe, "ought not to be neglected. It may be

"ſo

" ſo managed, that we may be acquaint-
" ed with theſe people, and they may be
" uſeful to us."—" I ſhall take care of
" that," replied my huſband. " Beſides
" that the inhabitants we ſaw are at a
" great diſtance from us, the moun-
" tain, as it appears to me, is on their
" ſide impaſſable by its height and ſteep-
" neſs; and I am very glad of it: for I
" do not think we ſhould gain any thing
" by having a communication with them;
" on the contrary, I think we ſhould
" run great riſks in ſuffering them to ap-
" proach us. If they are Europeans,
" they would become our maſters, and
" deprive us of our plantations here,
" as well as of our happineſs and the li-
" berty which we now enjoy. If they
" are ſavages, it would be ſtill worſe;
" therefore, the beſt thing, I think, is for
" us to remain as we are."

When I was alone with M. d'Ermancour, I aſked him what he thought of Ninette's eagerneſs to ſee the people on theother ſide of the mountain. " I think," ſaid he, " ſhe wiſhes much to ſee a new

" world,

" world, of which ſhe has only an imperfect
" idea. This curioſity was occaſioned by
" my arrival here. Till then, ſhe thought
" you the only one of your kind, and was
" content with her ſituation. But when ſhe
" learnt that there exiſted different beings
" from thoſe ſhe met within the place where
" ſhe was confined, her ideas multiplied;
" and ſince we have taught her that there are
" immenſe countries well cultivated, and
" large ſuperb cities filled with people,
" whom one meets every moment in the
" ſtreets, her imagination eaſily tranſports
" her to theſe places, which ſhe ſo much
" wiſhes to ſee."—"Her reaſons for wiſh-
" ing to go from hence are very natural, I
" tell her; but I am ſorry you have re-
" newed and encreaſed her deſire to go
" away, by this new diſcovery which you
" have made."

" You are very right, my dear Zelia," replied M. d'Ermancour; "I was very ſorry
" when I ſaw the effect my intelligence
" produced on her mind; but as to the
" reſt, perhaps we may derive good
" from it. It may be, that the hope of
" going from hence may contribute to
" make

" make her ſituation more ſupportable,
" and in conſequence, reſtore her to her
" former eaſe and cheerfulneſs. There-
" fore, I am of opinion it will be beſt,
" if you approve it, to leave her in this
" error, which ſhe ſeized with ſo much
" avidity."

I approved of this little treachery, and for ſome time we congratulated ourſelves on the alteration we obſerved from day to day in the mind and manners of poor Ninette. She now very ſeldom left us; ſhe was kind and attentive; ſhe alſo recovered her former gaiety, and we were delighted to ſee her return to her uſual ſtate. We applauded ourſelves for having ſucceeded ſo well, when we found ourſelves but too unfortunately deceived. I cannot yet recover from my aſtoniſhment, when I reflect on the perfect ſecurity we were in on her account. She had ever ſhewn the greateſt frankneſs and ſincerity; and her countenance was ſo expreſſive, that ſhe often diſcovered, in ſpite of her attempts to conceal them, the ſmalleſt emotions of her heart.

I, who

I, who perfectly knew her temper by having for a long time ſtudied it, was deceived by it as well as the reſt. I was ſo, even longer than others, becauſe I could never believe or imagine ſhe could think of leaving us, which, however, ſhe ſoon did, for one morning ſhe diſappeared, without leaving any trace of her flight.

When Jerome, whom I had ſent to fetch her home to dinner, came and told me he could not find her any where in the places where ſhe uſed to walk, I was not much alarmed; I thought ſhe might have gone farther than ordinary, and after waiting in vain for her another hour, we ate our dinner, with an intention to go into the foreſt to ſeek for her, expecting every moment to meet her. But we went a long way without ſeeing or hearing any thing of her; and as the night came on without gaining any intelligence, I began to fear ſome fatal event had happened. I had left the care of my children to Jerome; but as it now grew dark, I returned home in order to ſend him to accompany his maſter, if he meant to

go

go on farther. I made M. d'Ermancour promiſe, before I left him, that he ſhould not go into any out-of-the-way paths, and that he would ſoon return back again, which he did ſome hours after, very much fatigued, and quite diſcouraged.

"Ah!" ſaid he, as he came into the houſe, "I have no hope left; the poor "child—" And he ſhed many tears, accuſing himſelf as the cauſe of her flight.

For my part, who till this moment had been in hopes of her return, I could not hear my huſband's complaints without being perfectly wretched. I deplored the abſence of my dear child; I entreated Heaven to reſtore her to me, and even reproached M. d'Ermancour, as he had done himſelf, and accuſed him of having contributed to our common misfortune. When I grew more calm, "Let "us not aggravate our troubles," ſaid I. "How can you have occaſioned the "flight of this child? Why ſhould we "ſuppoſe we have loſt her for ever? May

" ſhe not have loſt her way? My dear
" friend, whatever may be the reſult,
" never ſay or think that you have made
" any one unhappy. Who is there on
" earth can be contented with themſelves,
" if you are not ſo; if you reproach
" yourſelf with events which may na-
" turally ariſe from our ſituation? It is I
" that am the firſt original cauſe! But for
" me, you would now have been happy in
" your own country, in the midſt of your
" own family. Do not, therefore, ac-
" cuſe any one but me of your ſad deſ-
" tiny. Ninette may reproach me alſo
" with being the cauſe of her misfortune,
" and I ſhall not murmur at it. But
" you," ſaid I, " moſt amiable of men!
" whoſe love and friendſhip conducted
" you into this Deſert for my happineſs,
" do not, O do not make me wretched,
" which muſt inevitably be the caſe, if I
" ſee your mind made unhappy by too
" great a delicacy, which makes you
" unjuſt to yourſelf. Let us join in la-
" menting the fate of the unfortunate
" Ninette; let us weep for her if ſhe is

" not reſtored to us again; but do not
" let us accuſe ourſelves of having
" been the cauſe of this fatal accident.
" Have you not obſerved from her in-
" fancy, that ſhe wiſhed to ſee thoſe
" countries of which ſhe heard us
" ſpeak? Remember her giving liberty to
" all her little birds:—that was the
" time when ſhe wiſhed ſo much to have
" her own. Since then, her whole con-
" verſation has led that way. She was
" neither eaſy nor contented, although
" ſhe tried to appear ſo. How often
" have I found her melancholy and pen-
" ſive even when we thought her hap-
" pieſt. O that I had not awakened
" in her, wiſhes ſo natural to her age!
" Ought I to have concealed from her,
" in her infancy, the knowledge of a
" ſituation different from her own? In
" that caſe, it would have been neceſ-
" ſary, in order to avoid the misfortune
" we apprehend, to have brought up
" this child, deſtined to be my only
" companion, in a perfect ignorance of
" every thing which paſſes in the world.

" What ſociety for me! What a re-
" ſource would it have been to me, and
" what injuſtice to her! No, I ſhall
" never reproach myſelf with having
" cultivated her mind, enlightened her
" ideas, and increaſed her pleaſures, by
" deſcribing to her the beauties of na-
" ture, and the extent of the univerſe.
" Whatever part ſhe flies to, let us be-
" lieve, my dear huſband, that ſhe will
" love and bleſs us. But I cannot yet
" believe ſhe has abandoned us, ſhe ap-
" peared ſo contented. Perhaps ſhe had
" a deſire to ſee thoſe habitations which
" are beyond the mountain. The diſ-
" tance they are from us, the precipices
" ſhe will have to encounter in order
" to arrive there, will ſtop her, and ſhe
" will return. Her curioſity, which will
" coſt her great trouble, and us great
" grief, will perhaps cure her of making
" another attempt."

" My dear Zelia," ſaid my huſband,
" how good you are to give me theſe
" conſolations! Heaven grant that all
" your predictions, which ſupport my

" ſpirits

"ſpirits and give me hopes, may be fol-
"lowed by the return of our dear Ni-
"nette! But I dare not flatter myſelf
"with it; ſhe is ſo courageous, ſo enter-
"priſing, and her wiſhes are ſo earneſt,
"that it will be with great difficulty ſhe
"will renounce her ſchemes, however
"dangerous they may be. I cannot
"think of the dangers ſhe will expoſe
"herſelf to without trembling. So
"young, ſo delicate, how can ſhe en-
"counter perils which even myſelf ſome-
"times have thought I could not con-
"quer? O that day-light would re-
"turn, that I might go, and before it is
"too late guard her againſt misfortunes,
"the idea of which wounds me to the
"heart. Do not, my dear Zelia, op-
"poſe my intentions; it will be in vain.
"Promiſe me alſo not to follow me;
"take care of our children; preſerve
"this dear treaſure, the cement of our
"affections; come and ſwear to me in
"their ſight, that you ſubmit to what I
"requeſt of you."——He led me to
their bed, and after embracing them many

times he put them into my arms, and entreated me on his knees not to leave them a moment, and then went away in tears.

He had not gone an hundred ſteps from the door before he repented having quitted me ſo haſtily, and without having tried to calm the uneaſineſs with which my poor heart was oppreſſed. I was on my knees with my infants, who, ſeeing what I was doing, followed my example, and both the little creatures knelt down and raiſed their hands to Heaven, to implore the Almighty to preſerve the life of ſo good a father. I ſaw him return at this moment, and he advanced ſo quick that I had not time to change my attitude before I found him in my arms.

"Ah!" cried he, "what an affecting "ſight is this!" preſſing us all three to his heart. "But what does my beloved "wife fear? Do you want confidence in "me? Do you think that I could go far "without reflecting on my fault, without returning haſtily to comfort you, "and to take meaſures together which "may ſpare you the ſlighteſt uneaſineſs?

"Do

" Do you not know that you are, and " ever will be, the abſolute miſtreſs of " my will? Fear not that I ſhall fool- " iſhly expoſe my life; alas, I know that " yours depends upon it, and that I " alſo owe it to my dear children." I was ſo much affected by the different ſenſations I experienced, that I could only anſwer him by preſſing him in my arms. At length we took every precaution we thought likely to make us ſucceſsful in our ſearches.

Jerome, who came in at this time, gave us ſome hope. He told us he had diſcovered which way Ninette had taken. " I ſaw," ſaid he, " the print of her " footſtep on the bank of a rivulet " which runs out of the mountain where " we loſt ourſelves a few days ago; but " it is at a great diſtance from where " we went. The mountain, though " very ſteep there, is not ſo much ſo as " on the other ſide. I found near the " rivulet a bobbin of thread, which " I have brought you. It is a proof of " her exiſtence, though a weak one;

" for which reaſon I will keep it. " How valuable did it ſeem to me!"— We formed a favourable judgment from this trifling incident. It was evident that Ninette was gone to ſeek for the inhabitants beyond the mountain, and almoſt as certain that ſhe might be overtaken on the road. In conſequence, it was determined that Jerome and his maſter ſhould go to the ſide of the rivulet, after they had eaten, and reſted themſelves for a few hours. It was broad day-light when they ſet out, and I went to bed a ſhort time after. The hopes my huſband had given me made me fall into a ſound and quiet ſleep, which laſted till near night; my infants alſo ſlept equally well, and did not awake till the noiſe I made in riſing diſturbed them. In the ſituation I was in at that time, I could do nothing better than ſleep; the day would have appeared very long and tedious, and I ſhould not have paſſed it without great uneaſineſs and impatience. I was very much rejoiced to find that I had ſlept nearly to the

the time when I expected M. d'Ermancour's return. He and Jerome came back a few minutes after, both much fatigued, and more discouraged than ever. I begged them to go to bed, and they consented. Mean time, I tried to employ myself; and to this purpose went into Ninette's chamber for some work, which I usually left there on a table. Here I found a letter, which I read with the greatest eagerness. It will be seen by the contents that it could not avoid increasing my concern. Her unhappiness was but too plainly discovered by the following words, which it contained:

" By what title shall I address you, " my dear Madam? I say Madam, for " I no longer dare to call myself your " child, or your friend, since I am go- " ing, by my *flight*, to break through " those connections which attached you " to me. *By my flight!* Ah! what can " have reduced me to such an extremi- " ty? The disorder of my mind! I am " no longer that innocent and virtuous " girl whom you brought up and che-

" riſhed with ſo much tenderneſs and
" affection. I am ſunk in my own
" eyes; and it is to withdraw myſelf
" from yours, that I determine upon
" leaving you. Pity me, and think
" ſometimes on the unhappy Ninette,
" and let her not be forgot in a family
" I ſhall ever love, whatever place I
" may be in. But do not afflict your-
" ſelf at my abſence. Do I not carry
" with me the cruel idea of having oc-
" caſioned you long and bitter ſorrow?
" Do not conſider me as I have been;
" but, for your own comfort, ſee me
" what I now am, no longer deſerving
" to live in ſo virtuous, ſo generous a
" ſociety. Paint to yourſelf my diffi-
" culty, my conſtant reſtraint, with you
" and your amiable huſband. May you
" long and peacefully enjoy the happi-
" neſs you both merit! Should your
" tenderneſs for me draw tears from
" your eyes when you think of my ſitu-
" ation far from you, do not accuſe me
" of ingratitude: that is not my crime;
" do not ſuppoſe it. I ſhall never for-

" get

" get what I owe to you, nor the ten-
" derneſs, the reſpect, the admiration
" which I have for you. All theſe ſen-
" timents are engraved at the bottom
" of my heart; I will preſerve them as
" long as I live. I know not whither
" I am going; I neither know the people
" nor the country I am in ſearch of;
" I am even ignorant whether I ſhall
" ever arrive there. But whatever fate
" attends me, I could not avoid it. It
" is abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould
" go from hence. Happy ſhall I be,
" if I can ſome time or other return
" more worthy of you and the adorable
" man who, in ſpite of all my efforts,
" is preſent to my eyes. Yes, I love
" this charming being who ought only
" to be yours; at this time I am no
" longer afraid to acknowledge it; I
" ſhall not bluſh at it in your preſence;
" I ſhall be far from you when you
" read this letter. I have ſolicited him,
" even preſſed him to love me as he
" does you. I ſhould have made him
" a traitor and a perjurer, had he re-

" plied to the ſentiments of a paſſionate
" heart, which might, in the ignorance
" I was in, have ruined us both. But
" the integrity of his heart was not to
" be corrupted by the feeble attractions
" of a ſimple girl. He has conſtantly
" avoided me; and I owe him gratitude
" and admiration for ſuch noble conduct!
" How ought you to love him! you who
" are his happy companion! Ah! love
" him, love him always; he truly de-
" ſerves it. Why cannot I be witneſs
" of this charming union? Pity me,
" pity me, both of you, and love me
" always.—My dear, my good and
" tender mother, my moſt faithful
" friend, permit me to call you ſtill by
" thoſe names ſo dear to my heart, and
" to implore your pardon on my knees.
" Pardon me both of you: let Jerome
" and the dear babies bleſs me alſo;
" remind them ſometimes of the poor
" Ninette. Adieu! adieu, all my dear
" kind friends; I am drowned in tears
" while I bid you this cruel and fatal
" farewel."

This

This letter greatly affected me on reading it: I ſeemed to have found my dear Ninette again; ſhe at leaſt taught me that ſhe had not left us with indifference, ſince ſhe endeavoured to conſole us for our loſs; ſhe affected my heart and drew tears from my eyes, but they were not tears of anger. I thought I ſaw and heard her; ſhe was employed in thinking of me, my huſband, and my children, in ſhort of all the family, which ſhe had ſeemed to abandon with reluctance; I read her heart, I ſaw the purity of her mind, and ſhe appeared ready to renounce her intentions, after having acknowledged her error. But theſe illuſions vaniſhed at the end of her letter, and I ſeemed at that moment to feel the cruel pain of loſing her a ſecond time. After reading it over and over, I conſidered what I ſhould do with regard to M. d'Ermancour. Should I run the riſk of renewing his grief, and increaſing the reproaches which he made himſelf?— "When he ſhall have read this letter," ſaid I, "he will perhaps be in doubt

"whether

" whether he is the real cauſe of her " flight: he will ſee clearly that it is the " ſhame and grief for the error the poor " girl has fallen into, which has made " her encounter ſuch dangers without " foreſeeing them. On the other hand, " how can I conceal this intereſting " letter from M. d'Ermancour? He " cannot ſee without pleaſure the eulo- " gium ſhe ſo ingenuouſly makes on " his virtues and amiable qualities."— I had not determined what to do, when I ſaw him ſuddenly enter the room. As I was in Ninette's chamber, it was very natural he ſhould ſuppoſe that the paper he ſaw in my hand had belonged to her. " What have you got there?" ſaid he, advancing with ſome emotion to take the letter. There was no time to deliberate: I gave it to him without ſaying a word, and went away to give him liberty to read what I knew would ſo much affect him. He came to me ſome time after in the garden, where I had gone with my children; I went to him, and embraced him with tears in my eyes;

he

he eaſily underſtood this expreſſion of my heart; he replied, ſighing, that he ſhould always conduct himſelf as he had hitherto done, if he found himſelf in the ſame ſituation: I talked of other things, to divert his chagrin; and we paſſed all the day and the next morning without going out, when Jerome and he both went a long way in hopes of diſcovering Ninette, but always returned unſucceſsful.

Let us now go back to the poor fugitive, running over rocks and through foreſts. She had ſo frequently in her walks ſought for roads to arrive at the top of the mountain, that ſhe found it much leſs difficult than M. d'Ermancour and Jerome had, when they loſt their way. The following is what we learned of her journey many years after her flight:

She went from the houſe with ſome few neceſſaries, which ſhe put in a baſket, with proviſions ſufficient for four or five days, that ſhe might not abſolutely die of hunger. This little package ſhe faſtened to her ſaſh; ſhe had

had a cane in her hand, and was dreſſed as uſual in a white callico levite, with a ſtraw hat, which diſcovered her long and beautiful hair tied up in ſeveral braids; and for a companion, ſhe took with her a turtle dove, of which ſhe was very fond, and always carried it about with her. Happily for her, it was the fineſt ſeaſon of the year, and the beſt for travelling in our diſtricts, as the great heats were over. Here was ſhe, at the break of day, weeping, and returning every minute to look at the houſe ſhe had abandoned, and which not only contained every one who was dear to her in the world, but every one ſhe knew in the whole univerſe. "Adieu for the laſt "time," ſaid ſhe, "my deareſt, and moſt "reſpected friends, do not forget the "poor unhappy Ninette!" — Theſe words, which ſhe pronounced aloud, were the effuſions of her grief at leaving the place of her birth: but as ſoon as ſhe had loſt ſight of thoſe objects which were known to her, her uneaſineſs on her unhappy fate, and the great attention

tention ſhe was obliged to pay to her ſteps in order to find her way to the mountain, took up all her thoughts. She walked on gently to the banks of the rivulet where Jerome ſaw her foot-ſteps; and after ſhe had ate and drank, ſhe and her little companion, whom ſhe uſually carried in her pocket, took their way to the mountain by the fartheſt road, as it was leſs ſteep than the other. She did not arrive at the ſummit till night; but ſhe fortunately found a kind of cavern, where ſhe remained till day. In this place her melancholy ideas, the darkneſs and ſilence of the night, and the frightful ſolitude ſhe was in, took away from her all her courage. "Good God!" ſaid ſhe, as ſhe entered this cavern, which probably had hitherto only ſerved as a ſhelter to wild beaſts, "what have I done! This place will be "my tomb; I ſhall never go out of it; "no, it is impoſſible! The horror it "inſpires me with, and the dread of "ſeeing ſome of thoſe animals approach, "whoſe ſmalleſt cries would kill me

"with

" with terror, will undoubtedly prevent " my living till morning. O mamma!" ſaid ſhe, " if you ever hear of my death, " which chance may perhaps ſome time " diſcover to you; or rather if M. d'Er- " mancour ſhould, in ſearch of his " game, ever come this way, let him " not enter this gloomy cavern, where he " will find nothing but the ſad remains " of the unhappy Ninette. Weep, weep " her ſad fate; but do not ſay ſhe de- " ſerved it. Pity her for having left " you; but do not accuſe her of having " quitted you with indifference. Ah! " you can never imagine what it coſt me " to leave the chamber where you were " both ſleeping ſo ſweetly: my heart at " that moment was more wounded, " more afflicted than even now in the " frightful ſituation where I am bidding " you a laſt farewel. Happy, happy " pair! whoſe felicity perhaps I may " have diſturbed, pardon me, pardon " me, both of you! Alas! I am but " too ſeverely puniſhed for my fault."

She

She at laſt fell aſleep, overcome with ſorrow and fatigue. It was broad day-light when ſhe awoke. Her firſt care was to ſeek her dove, which commonly ſlept by her; but the poor little bird, being very hungry, had gone out by break of day to ſeek for ſome food: fortunately he did not go far, but ſoon came to his miſtreſs's hand, who called to him with great anxiety. "Come," ſaid ſhe, "my good little friend, do not "you forſake me. Alas! I little thought "how dear you would be to me, when "I firſt fed you and brought you up: "I did not imagine at that time that "you would ever be my only faithful "companion."—She afterwards knelt down to pray, and return thanks to the Almighty Being who had preſerved her from dangers which ſhe had thought inevitable. The ſun, that bright planet, the life of all nature, re-animated her ſpirits, and gave her freſh courage; ſhe ate enough of her ſlender proviſions to ſtrengthen her and give her reſolution ſufficient to enter the cavern where ſhe had

had paſſed the night; ſhe found it much more extenſive than ſhe imagined, and perhaps ſhe would not have ventured in, had ſhe known how large it was. She now viſited it from mere curioſity; and after ſhe had gone a long way without finding the end to it, ſhe heſitated whether to advance or not, when ſhe perceived a light, which was ſtill at a great diſtance; but on proceeding farther, ſhe found that the light came from the ſun, which penetrated through the rock, that had an opening at the end of the cavern. The deſire of making ſome diſcovery by this aperture, made her go on to the end; but what was her aſtoniſhment, when ſhe ſaw through this opening an immenſe country totally different from the part ſhe had inhabited, being all well cultivated, and a prodigious number of houſes, which moſt probably contained an infinite number of inhabitants. This ſight, which ſhe obſerved for the firſt time, filled her with veneration and fear, and afterwards with a more pleaſing ſentiment, and more ſuitable to her ideas,

as

as it made her imagine that perhaps this was M. d'Ermancour's country, which ſhe ſo much wiſhed to ſee. She was then delighted to think that ſhe ſhould doubtleſs here be able to find the relations of her dear mamma, to whom ſhe could give intelligence of her ſituation; and they might ſoon go in ſearch of her. She was in raptures at the thought of being able to do ſomething for her good friends, who had been ſo kind to her: but on ſecond thoughts, ſhe was inclined to believe the country ſhe ſaw might be that which M. d'Ermancour had diſcovered from the top of the mountain, and which he did not wiſh to make himſelf acquainted with. "Alas! then," ſaid ſhe, "I am not ſo fortunate as "I thought; no, this cannot be my "mamma's country; do I not know "that we muſt croſs the ſea to arrive at "that? Have I not heard ſo a hundred "times? Ah, my God, inſtruct me "what to do! I am more undetermined "than ever, ſince I have ſeen this im-"menſe country of people whom I know

"nothing

" nothing of. Shall I go and deliver
" myſelf up to them as an unhappy
" fugitive without ſupport, and without
" friends to anſwer for my integrity?
" What ſhall I ſay when they aſk me
" from whence I came? Ought I to riſk
" the diſcovery of my dear friends?
" No; as I know nothing of this people,
" I certainly ought to be ſilent. And
" what can they think of a young woman
" who arrives like a mad creature,
" without being able to ſay who ſhe is,
" or whence ſhe came, or what engaged
" her to come to people ſhe was wholly
" unacquainted with? They would not
" receive me; they would repulſe me;
" they would mortify me; and I ſhould
" have no one to defend me. Ah! why
" did I not I make theſe reflections be-
" fore I quitted my dear friends? I have
" loſt all in leaving them. But I was
" alſo very unhappy for ſome time paſt
" with them; I could not any longer
" look on M. d'Ermancour without ex-
" treme concern; I was under the
" greateſt reſtraint in his preſence:

" I was

" I was alſo diſtreſſed with my mamma;
" I ſhould have been ſtill more ſo after
" the confeſſion I had made; I cannot
" return any more to them; no, it muſt
" not be thought of. Ah! miſerable,
" unhappy Ninette, how cruel is your
" deſtiny!"—After this exclamation, ſhe remained a long time abſorbed in her own ideas; but at length ſhe determined to purſue her road. " What
" danger do I run?" ſaid ſhe; " I can
" but die, and that is full as well as
" being here."

The iſland we were on was that which is called the Iſland of Sumatra, one of thoſe which they call the Sunda Iſlands; conſequently, the country which Ninette had juſt diſcovered made a part of them. It was very extenſive, and very near to the Iſle of Java, where my father's eſtate was. The cavern in which Ninette had paſſed the night was the remains of a volcano, or rather was cloſe to a volcano which had been for many years extinguiſhed; and after the laſt eruption of it, the neighbouring inhabitants

habitants had totally abandoned that part of the mountain behind which was our habitation; and this was the reaſon we were totally ignorant of them. They had alſo laws, which they religiouſly adhered to, and by which they were forbidden to approach this mountain beyond certain limits which had been marked out, and which they had never attempted to break through, becauſe they had an ancient tradition that it was inhabited by evil ſpirits.

The Iſle of Sumatra is divided into many little kingdoms, the moſt powerful of which is that of Achem, which includes at leaſt one-third of the iſland. The Dutch are in poſſeſſion of four or five ſtrong ſettlements there, and it is governed chiefly by their laws; the principal city is Achem, which is large, and a place of great trade; the king of the country reſides there, and it was this city which Ninette had diſcovered from the opening in the rock. She found that if ſhe could get through this aperture ſhe ſhould greatly ſhorten her way; ſhe

therefore made an attempt to do ſo, and with great difficulty ſucceeded, though ſhe was remarkably ſlender. When ſhe was on the other ſide of the mountain, ſhe found herſelf on a little hill covered with moſs; ſhe knelt down, and recommended herſelf to the Almighty, and then went ſlowly on; ſhe conſidered, as ſhe walked along, what ſhe ſhould ſay to the firſt perſon ſhe met with; ſhe remembered what I had many times related to her of my ſhipwreck; ſhe determined to tell the ſame ſtory pretty nearly, but pretend that ſhe was thrown on a rock by herſelf, and that ſhe knew not what became of the reſt of the ſhip's company. When ſhe deſcended the hill, ſhe found herſelf under a new difficulty: ſhe neither found houſes there, as ſhe imagined ſhe ſhould, nor did ſhe even ſee thoſe ſhe had diſcovered before; ſhe thought ſhe muſt have come far out of her way, and went on a great deal farther before ſhe ſaw any thing like a houſe. At length ſhe perceived an empty hut; and as ſhe was greatly fa-

tigued, and night approached, ſhe retired into it to reſt herſelf, and wait for the coming day. She gave herſelf up to the moſt melancholy reflections, though not quite ſo bad as thoſe of the night before; and ſhe ſlept better, becauſe ſhe was more fatigued.

Not far from the place where ſhe ſlept, there were a great number of theſe kinds of huts, which were inhabited by people employed in the culture of pepper. But Ninette had neither ſeen the huts nor the plantations, becauſe they were near a quarter of a league diſtant. What could equal her aſtoniſhment, on perceiving, when ſhe awoke in the morning, an old prieſt and near a dozen people at the door of the hut, whoſe faces and hands were all as black as the prieſt's habit? They were all looking earneſtly at her. This frightful ſight ſhe at firſt took for a dream, and put her hand before her eyes as if to efface this diſagreeable impreſſion; which in fact ſhe did, as on opening them again ſhe found every body had diſappeared except the prieſt,

who

who ſtood at a little diſtance, and ſaid nothing to her for ſome minutes, when he made her a very low bow, and gave her demonſtrations of the moſt profound reſpect. This ſalutation, which could not inſpire her with fear, engaged her to ſpeak to him. "Who are you, my "good father?" ſaid ſhe; "pray tell "me where I am, and inform me what "will become of me in this country, "which is entirely unknown to me."— The good prieſt, who ſpoke French tolerably well, but in that moment ſaw no reſource to ſave her from the danger which threatened her, gave her only vague anſwers to her queſtions. Nevertheleſs, if ſhe had judged by the reſpect, even to adoration, which this honeſt prieſt and the blacks who ſtood by Ninette paid her, ſhe might have thought they miſtook her for a divinity. However, this was not their idea; they at firſt took her for a princeſs belonging to the court of the king of Achem; but the beautiful whiteneſs of her ſkin made them ſuppoſe her ſome foreign princeſs

who had loſt her way: notwithſtanding which, they continued to treat her with the ſame reſpect.

One of theſe blacks, who knew the cuſtom of the country, went directly to the king to acquaint him with the diſcovery he had made; during which the good miſſionary took great care to prevent the villagers, who began to crowd round Ninette, from coming too near her: ſhe remained with the prieſt alone, who went from time to time to the door, to talk to and prevent them from coming in. They brought the princeſs, as they called her, ſomething to eat; and ſhe accuſtomed herſelf to ſee them without fear: they offered her a little rice in a plate, and preſented it in a very reſpectful manner; ſhe ate it with a very good appetite, and then thanked them in the moſt graceful manner poſſible, which ſeemed to give them great pleaſure, as they fell to dancing and clapping their hands.

All this time Ninette knew not what was to become of her, and the good

father

father could not tell her. Meantime ſhe amuſed herſelf with careſſing her little turtle-dove, who did not ſeem frightened by the number of people who ſaw him playing with his miſtreſs. At laſt Ninette, being tired with obſerving that no one offered to conduct her to a better habitation than the hut ſhe was in, made a ſign that ſhe wiſhed to go out of it; but her protector oppoſed it, at the ſame time expreſſing his concern that he had it not in his power to leave her at liberty to do as ſhe would. At this the poor Ninette began to be terrified.— "How," ſaid ſhe, "have I deceived my- "ſelf, by the reception theſe people "have given me! What will they do with "me?" Her tears began to flow, when ſhe heard a great noiſe, and ſaw at the ſame time people running and jumping, crying out all the way, which frightened her very much, though they appeared to be cries of joy. The prieſt encouraged her as much as he could, but the firſt impreſſion had ſuch an effect that ſhe fainted away, and did not ſee a caval-

cade of young noblemen whom the king had ſent to ſee the beautiful ſtranger he had been told of, and to enquire the motive of her coming into his kingdom; and this was the reaſon of the blacks joy and hollowing.

The poor Ninette was reſtored by degrees to her ſenſes, by the care of one of the young men, who was at her feet, holding a ſmelling bottle to her noſe, which he did from time to time with great care and complaiſance, while the others looked on with admiration. They ſpoke with great earneſtneſs to each other, but ſhe did not underſtand a word they ſaid.

Let any one imagine her aſtoniſhment: when ſhe opened her eyes, ſhe fixed them firſt on him who was neareſt to her, and ſhewed her ſurpriſe by her troubled countenance. He underſtood that language, and got up and went to a diſtance from her, but never took his eyes off from her. He perceived that ſhe looked about for ſomebody with great anxiety. This nobleman, who was called Aſſan Effendi, gueſſed that ſhe wanted to ſpeak to the

good

good prieſt, in whom all her confidence was placed. This miniſter had ſo mild and honeſt a countenance, that he had intereſted her at the firſt ſight, and ſhe was not ſatisfied, or free from fear, till ſhe ſaw him near her. Aſſan Effendi went directly to fetch him, who was only gone to do ſervice to his fair charge. This good old man was acquainted with an honeſt Dutch merchant in the village, who had lived there ſome years, and who ſpoke French well, and might help to ſave the beautiful ſtranger. As he was returning with the Dutch gentleman, he met Aſſan Effendi, from whom he learnt that ſhe had placed all that confidence in him which he could deſire. He had conceived a great friendſhip for her, and from the firſt moment looked on her as his child, without, however, knowing whether he ſhould be happy enough to ſave her from the dangers to which ſhe would be expoſed at the king's court.

As ſoon as Ninette ſaw him, ſhe held out her hand to him, and called him her father and her friend. "Do not aban-

" don me," ſaid ſhe, in an affectionate tone, " but aſſiſt me; I put myſelf un-" der your protection." She made him come near to her. The good man was delighted; he promiſed ſhe ſhould not be deceived in the truſt ſhe put in him. She then gained a little courage, and aſked what all thoſe perſons were by whom ſhe was ſurrounded, and if ſhe might not be relieved from them. The good Dutchman then informed her, that ſhe was in a country chiefly inhabited by Mahometans, and that the king, according to the cuſtom of the place, bought up all the beautiful women at whatever price they were valued. He could ſay no more at this time, becauſe the courtiers of the king of Achem began to be diſpleaſed at the little attention which was paid to them. They bade the prieſt aſk Ninette of what country ſhe was, what her name was, and what induced her to come to the king of Achem's kingdom? When theſe queſtions were put to her, ſhe entreated theſe nobles would be ſo obliging as to leave

leave her a moment with the miſſionary and the Dutch merchant, who in a ſhort time ſhould bring them her anſwers. They went out as ſhe requeſted, and then ſhe aſked the advice of her two friends, but did not confide to them her whole hiſtory; ſhe only informed them in few words, that ſhe was thrown half dead upon a rock, from on board a veſſel, which was ſhipwrecked, and that ſhe was ignorant of what became of the reſt of the ſhip's company; and that when ſhe came to herſelf from a fainting fit, and ſeeing no reſource from the ſea-ſhore, ſhe had turned into a large foreſt, and after walking many days had chanced to come upon the mountain from whence ſhe perceived the country ſhe was now in. She thought ſhe might apply for protection to the inhabitants, and ſhe was come to implore with earneſtneſs that aſſiſtance of which ſhe had ſo much need.

Poor Ninette never imagined, in relating this falſe hiſtory, that even her little turtle-dove might have made them doubt the truth of her narrative; for it was

not probable that ſhe ſhould have been able to ſave this bird in the danger ſhe had been in: but fortunately theſe good people to whom ſhe addreſſed herſelf did not think of it, and the tender intereſt they took in her, and their great deſire to keep her from the king's ſight, did not permit them to reflect on the circumſtances of her adventure. "This," ſaid ſhe to them, "is my hiſtory in ſhort; "I will give you a more particular account "another time. Tell me now, my dear "protectors, what I have to hope or "fear, in a country where you ſay the "king buys all the women who pleaſe "him. I cannot tell what that means. "What does he do with the women "he buys?" ——— "Alas! Madam," ſaid the good Dutchman, "he ſhuts "them up in fine apartments, where "they want for nothing but their li-"berty."—"I never heard of ſuch ty-"ranny before," ſaid Ninette. "The "king then muſt not know that I am "here; you can hide me ſomewhere till

"I can

" I can find a way to get out of the " the kingdom ?"

" That cannot be," ſaid the old man; " the king is already acquainted with it; " and it was to ſee you, and aſk you " queſtions, that he ſent thoſe young " lords who were with you."—" But," ſaid the old man, " there may be a means " of ſaving the lady, at leaſt for ſome " days, by ſaying ſhe was an inhabitant " of the Mountain. You know the diſ- " like he has to every one who comes " from this proſcribed mountain." The prieſt approved this ſcheme, and ſaid, he had had the ſame thought, which muſt be put in execution directly, by telling it to the young courtiers who were waiting. They did not even ſtay to hear their interpreter finiſh his diſcourſe, but as ſoon as they heard the beautiful lady was an inhabitant of the Mountain of Evil Spirits, they went away without wiſhing to know more; and there was only the perſon who had aſſiſted Ninette during her faintneſs, who returned to take leave of her,

which he did in the civileſt and moſt reſpectful manner. Ninette, who owed him a return for his kindneſs, thanked him by her interpreter, which gave great joy to Aſſan Effendi, who was much ſmitten by the beautiful lady of the Mountain.

Ninette was very happy to find her friends had been ſo lucky as to draw her out of the difficulty ſhe had been in. It was now neceſſary ſhe ſhould be lodged decently and conveniently. Fortunately, the Dutchman was in a ſituation to offer her an agreeable aſylum. He told her, he had a houſe large enough to allow him to give her a ſmall apartment, without incommoding either his wife or children. "O I am delighted," ſaid Ninette, "that you have a "wife and children; carry me quickly "to them; I ſhall be happy to be acquainted with your wife. But," ſaid ſhe, "now we talk of women, I have not "ſeen one ſince I have been here."—"My "wife will inform you of the reaſon of "this," ſaid he. "Let us go before "night

" night comes on, which is near at " hand."

During their walk to the village, Ninette never ceaſed to admire the beautiful country which ſhe had ſeen from the top of the Mountain; all ſhe now beheld was quite new to her; all that ſhe had ſeen in our habitation was only like a ſmall ſketch of what ſhe here ſaw at large, of the culture of rice and corn, of beautiful trees filled with fruit, and plantations of ſpices which ſhe knew not, all excited her curioſity at every ſtep. In ſhort, ſhe arrived at the village without thinking on the way ſhe had come. She went through the whole of it, as the Dutchman's houſe was at the further end. He was director in chief of the plantations ſhe had beheld, and was alſo employed by the Dutch Eaſt India Company as governor over the reſt of the traders in this place.

Ninette was delighted when ſhe ſaw the houſe ſhe was going to inhabit. Her conductor went before her, to acquaint his wife and children, who all came to receive

receive the beautiful lady, and gave her the moſt gracious reception. She aſſured them ſhe never would be ungrateful. "Ah! Madam," ſaid ſhe, "how "good you are, to receive with ſo much "kindneſs a young perſon who is come "to intreat your protection and hoſpi-"tality, and who has no other title to "your friendſhip than the neceſſity to "which her unhappy deſtiny has re-"duced her." The lady aſſured her, with great frankneſs and true Dutch hoſpitality, that ſhe had brought with her the beſt of all recommendations. She then took her by the hand, and led her to the apartment deſtined to her uſe. It was a very neat chamber, furniſhed with a wardrobe, toilet, and cabinet; and while Ninette was examining them, and ſeeing what they contained, the eldeſt daughter of the family came to her with a baſket of wearing apparel, which ſhe preſented to her in her mamma's name, who begged her to make uſe of it, and aſk for every thing ſhe wanted, as if ſhe was in her own houſe. "And I," ſaid the

the young lady, "on my part, will "do every thing in my power to give "you pleaſure."

Ninette embraced her many times, and intreated her friendſhip and kindneſs. They talked together for a little while; but as young people who are ſtrangers to each other are not apt to be very talkative, they looked at each other much more than they converſed. They aſked one another's ages, which were nearly equal, one being fifteen, the other ſixteen. Their names were not omitted: Ninette learned that this young lady was called Mirza, who, fearing to incommode her new acquaintance, ſoon retired, after aſſuring her ſhe loved her already very much.

Mirza was a pretty fair girl, but her beauty was by no means comparable to that of Ninette. If ſhe had conſulted her intereſt, her new friend would not have pleaſed her. But ſhe had a good heart, and ſhe loved Ninette from a motive of tenderneſs, which made her wiſh to be uſeful and pleaſing to her friends.

"You will now ſee me," ſaid Ninette, who for the future relates her hiſtory in her own words, "lodged and protected by "ſome of the beſt people in the world, "who made it their chief ſtudy to make "themſelves uſeful to me."

In the evening, at ſupper, they were much employed with thinking what methods were to be taken to prevent the ſearch which perhaps the king might make, if by chance he ſhould ſtill inſiſt upon purchaſing the foreign lady, inſtead of taking a diſlike to her. But as it was neceſſary to uſe every precaution, it was agreed that I ſhould not go out of the houſe till my friends were well acquainted with the opinion formed of me at court. After ſupper, the miſtreſs of the houſe conducted me to my chamber, where ſhe inſtructed me in the cuſtoms of the country, and the Mahometan religion, which permits men to take as many wives as they can maintain; and conſequently the king, who is richer than his ſubjects, has many more; they even ſay he

he has ſome hundreds. " For my part," added the Dutch lady, " I was fortunate " enough not to be born in this coun- " try."—" Indeed, madam, I perceive," ſaid I, " neither you nor your huſband " have your faces diſguiſed like thoſe " ſhocking blacks whom I ſaw. Why " do they make themſelves ſo frightful? " What can induce them to disfigure " themſelves in ſuch a manner?" — " Black is their natural colour," ſaid Madame Sping, which was the name of the Dutch lady.—" What! is that vile " black ſkin, which I could not look at " without diſguſt, natural to them? " And is the king of the ſame colour?" —" Undoubtedly he is: nature is the " ſame in kings as in their ſubjects."— " But the women," ſaid I; " they are " not black!"—" Yes, exactly the " ſame," ſaid ſhe.—" What is the " reaſon I have not ſeen any of them? " But I beg your pardon, Madam; per- " haps I aſk you too many queſtions; " but I am very ignorant, as you ſee." —" Do not reſtrain your curioſity," ſaid

ſaid Madame Sping; "believe me I "ſhall always take a real pleaſure in "being of any uſe to you. It is not "ſurpriſing that you ſhould not know "this country or its inhabitants: you "have never ſeen them, nor perhaps "ever heard of them; or at leaſt a part "of what you have heard may have "eſcaped your memory. I intreat you, "my dear young lady, to look on me "as your friend; you ſhall always find "me ready to do every thing in my "power to deſerve that title."—"You "make me very happy," ſaid I, taking her hand, which I preſſed in mine; "I ſhall find in you a ſecond mother." —At this moment Madame Sping's youngeſt daughter came to tell us, that the miſſionary, not being able to ſup with us, was come to enquire how the foreign lady did. "Come in, M. Suple," ſaid ſhe, which was the name of my firſt protector. It will be ſeen by the event that he never forfeited this character. They converſed ſome time together, and then we went to bed.

The

The next morning we all aſſembled to breakfaſt in Madame Sping's dreſſing-room. She and her lovely daughters gave me the moſt polite welcome; they ſaid the moſt flattering things on my perſon and complexion. "I owe "this healthy appearance," ſaid I, "to "the comfortable reſt your goodneſs "has procured me."—"Your good "father will come home preſently," ſaid the mother to her daughters, bidding them make the tea.—I then enquired after this worthy maſter of the family, who made it his conſtant practice to go every morning to overlook his plantations, and ſee if his men were all at work. They all three ſeemed to vie with each other in praiſing this good man, who made his wife and children ſo happy. "He will perhaps bring us "news to-day of your brother," ſaid Madame Sping to her eldeſt daughter; "for he is gone to the Engliſh ſettle-"ment."—"You have a ſon then, Ma-"dam?" ſaid I.—"Yes, Madam, I have "one," replied ſhe, "who till very

"lately

" lately has been a great comfort to me,
" but for ſome time paſt has given me
" great uneaſineſs. We ſcarcely ever ſee
" him at home now, who formerly never
" went out but to overlook the work-
" men, and take care of the plantations
" with his father; but ſince he has aſſo-
" ciated with the Engliſh, he neglects
" every thing but his pleaſures."—" He
" is, I ſuppoſe, very young," ſaid I.—
" Yes; he is about three-and-twenty,
" which is the proper age for buſineſs:
" beſides which, when young people are
" not uſefully employed, they are ge-
" nerally guilty of imprudences."—As
ſhe ſaid theſe words, ſhe perceived her
huſband and ſon coming into the room.
" So, ſo," ſaid ſhe to the latter, giving
him a tap on the ſhoulder, " you are
" come then, Monſieur le libertin! Re-
" turn thanks to this lady; for were it
" not for her, I ſhould ſcold you as you
" merit for not coming here laſt night."
—" Come, come, my dear," ſaid her
huſband, " I know his reaſons; he is
" not ſo much to blame as we thought:
" beſides,

" beſides, you muſt forgive him for the " good news he has brought with re- " gard to this lady."—" Good news " for me, Sir!" ſaid I, looking at the young man: " Alas! what news can " he bring to a perſon unknown as " I am."—" Unknown, it is true, Ma- " dam," replied the young man; " for " notwithſtanding all the fine things " ſaid of you, I find but a very im- " perfect deſcription of you."—" We " are not talking of compliments," ſaid his mother; " tell us what the " king ſaid when they carried the " young lady's anſwer to him: does he " ſtill perſiſt in diſliking every one who " comes from the Mountain?"—" Not " only diſlikes the perſon who comes " from thence," ſaid the ſon, " but " feels the ſame diſguſt to every body who " ſeems inclined to take notice of her." —He then whiſpered ſomething to his father, which made him laugh, ſaying, " Well, well, let him leave her to us." —I was afterwards told, that when the king heard I was at M. Sping's houſe, he ſaid,

ſaid, " Then let us leave her there, for " ſhe is only fit for a Dutchman;" and it was this which had made this good man laugh. It ſhould alſo be known, that the king and the Dutch did not agree very well, as the latter had nearly made themſelves maſters of the kingdom, having very good harbours and many ſettlements.

Every one was pleaſed with this intelligence, as the whole family intereſted themſelves much in my behalf; and I on my part felt myſelf much attached and very grateful to them. Madame Sping, who knew I wiſhed to write a journal of my life, allowed me to retire every morning from breakfaſt to dinner, aſſuring me that I ſhould never be interrupted.

When I was alone in my chamber one day, reflecting on all that had happened to me ſince I had quitted my dear friends, " Alas!" ſaid I to myſelf, " they ſtill " perhaps are lamenting my loſs, and " are uneaſy at my ſituation, which " would be ſtill more happy than it is, " could

" could I but inform them of it. I " hope, however, in a ſhort time to be " able to do it; for as I came here with- " out much difficulty, why ſhould I not " return, or at leaſt let them know where " I am? I muſt wait, and depend on " that Providence which has hitherto " preſerved me."—In this hope, and for my own ſatisfaction, I am going to employ myſelf in writing an account to my dear mamma, of every incident which happens to me, and of every ſecret thought of my heart.

LETTER I.

Eleven o'clock in the evening.

I HAVE nothing but agreeable intelligence to give you, my dear mamma. The father miſſionary dined with us, and we were very cheerful, and laughed much at the king's expence: M. Sping junior told us many pleaſant anecdotes of the prejudices of the court, which he related with great addreſs, and in a very agreeable

agreeable manner. He is a tall well-made young man, with fine features and a pleaſing countenance; he ſpent the whole day with us, which gave his mother great pleaſure, as ſhe is very fond of him. After dinner, I went for the firſt time into a room they call the ſaloon. I was much ſurpriſed to ſee myſelf reflected at whole length in a looking-glaſs, having never before ſeen any larger than thoſe made uſe of for toilets. I cried out, drawing back two or three paces, which greatly amazed the company. I then ſaid that I had never ſeen ſo large a glaſs, becauſe I had been brought up in a retreat where there were no other ſort than dreſſing-glaſſes. "I have," ſaid I to Madame Sping, "already ac-"quainted you with my ignorance, and "this is one proof of it, but you will "ſee many more."—"So much the "better," ſaid ſhe; "I ſhall love you "the more for it."—I afterwards heard her ſon ſpeaking to his ſiſter, and ſaying, that from the natural eaſe and politeneſs of my behaviour, he ſhould have

have thought I had been bred up in the great world. I repeat theſe praiſes, my dear mamma, becauſe if they are true, I owe them all to you.

A viſiter is arrived here, who, they would perſuade me, comes on purpoſe to ſee me. It is Aſſan Effendi, whom I ſaw the firſt day of my arrival in this place. He is a very obliging and polite young man; but I cannot look at him, ſo much does his black complexion diſguſt me. The younger Sping has joked with me much upon this ſubject, and will have it that I ſhall love him when I am better acquainted with him, and that he already ſaw by my eyes that I was ſorry when he went away; but I am ſure he was miſtaken, for I cannot endure him. M. Sping is doubtleſs in joke; but he will have it that this horrid black is in love with me; and he ſays ſuch fine things on the ſubject, and in ſuch a pleaſing manner, that I think him very much like M. d'Ermancour, and that he expreſſes himſelf in that delicate

manner which he always did. But it is now late; and ſo adieu, my dear mamma.

LETTER II.

Ten at night.

Ah, mamma! how you would love Madame Sping, if you could ſee how kind ſhe is to me! She came into my room this morning with a mantua-maker, who brought me two complete dreſſes, the prettieſt that can be imagined, and exactly fitted to my ſhape. They never mentioned it to me; but gave the mantua-maker a pair of ſtays belonging to Sophia, the youngeſt daughter of Madame Sping, as a pattern. One of the gowns is made of pink taffaty, the other of very fine India muſlin; both were made in the Engliſh faſhion, and accompanied by every other article of dreſs complete, as ſtockings, ſhoes, caps, hats and bonnets, even to gloves and fans. Every thing was purchaſed

chaſed by M. Sping junior, who had taken upon him this employment, and was gone to the city to haſten the work-women; and they ſaid he had even added to his mother's orders. The reaſon they were in ſuch haſte to procure theſe things was, becauſe Madame Sping carries me to-morrow to the city, with all her family, to dine with an old rich uncle, to whom her huſband is heir.

I was delighted with my new clothes; but one thing diſturbs and vexes me. I ſaw Madame Sping, though ſhe did not know it, pay a great many pieces of gold and ſilver to the people who made and brought home my clothes; and I aſked Mirza about it, who told me that theſe kind of things coſt a great deal of money, which ſhe could tell the better, as ſhe has a purſe of her own in order to purchaſe whatever ſhe wants. She informs me that nothing is to be had here without money; and that people who have no fortune, or do not ſupply their wants either by labour or induſtry, are in a miſerable ſituation. "Alas!

" I ſhould be then in miſery, were it " not for Madame Sping."—" But," ſaid Mirza, " if you had not met " with mamma, you would have found " ſome other friend; for there is no one " who would not have taken pleaſure " in aſſiſting you in your unfortunate " ſituation. For my own part I would " moſt willingly ſhare with you in " every thing I poſſeſs."—I embraced her tenderly, and aſſured her of my laſting gratitude. But ſince this converſation I have made many humiliating reflections on my ſituation. How ſhall I ever be able to return theſe good friends the favours they have done me? I not only am at this time without any money, but I have no hopes of ever having any; I muſt therefore learn to work, in order to procure ſome. I know there are people here who inſtruct young women, and I will inform myſelf of the proper means of making application to them.

Theſe reflections made me ſerious during dinner; the younger M. Sping obſerved

obſerved it, and made his mother remark it, and aſk me the reaſon; ſhe queſtioned me on the ſubject in the moſt delicate manner poſſible, yet I could perceive that Mirza had told her what had paſſed between us. "Mademoiſelle Ninette," ſaid Madame Sping, for I had told her my name, and that I was not married, which made them no longer call me Madam, "why are you more grave "than uſual to-day? Is it becauſe you "are afraid of going to morrow to "the city? or is your delicacy ſo much "hurt by accepting thoſe trifles which "this morning I had the pleaſure of pre-"ſenting to you?"—"Ah! Madam," ſaid I, "you have too much delicacy "yourſelf ever to wound the ſenſibility "of any one. I am deeply affected with "your kindneſs; but I hope you will "pardon now and then a little thought-"fulneſs, which the friendſhip you have "for me makes you obſerve, and only "attribute it to my unfortunate ſitua-"ation, which makes me fear I ſhall "never have it in my power to ſhew my

" gratitude as I could wiſh."—" Thoſe " fears are injurious to my friendſhip," ſaid Madame Sping: " but I forgive " you till you know me better. Mean " time promiſe me to think no more of " it; and let us go cheerfully and join " the company, which will raiſe my " ſon's ſpirits again, for I will not con- " ceal from you that he was the firſt " who perceived your looking uncom- " monly ſerious, and was much affected " by it."—" What!" ſaid I, " has " your ſon alſo the goodneſs to intereſt " himſelf about me?"—As I ſaid theſe words, I ſaw him return to the ſaloon; but he did not take notice of what I ſaid, though he heard me plainly. But ſome time after, he came, when the reſt of the company were all differently engaged, ſome at play and others talking, and ſeated himſelf by me in the window-ſeat, where I was very buſy working at a piece of tapeſtry which his ſiſter Mirza had been teaching me in the morning. He began talking on different ſubjects; but afterwards aſked me the meaning of

thoſe words he had heard me ſpeak on his coming into the ſaloon. " I am then to " judge by your exclamation, Madam, " that you were much ſurpriſed that " I ſhould be intereſted in your con- " cerns. But why ſhould you wonder? " Do you think then that any body can " ſee you and remain indifferent?" — I made him no anſwer, my eyes were fixed on my work; but I was much confuſed, and the bluſhes I felt on my cheek added to it. Fortunately Mirza came at that time and ſeated herſelf by me; and in order to conceal from her the confuſion I was in, I told her I had done my work wrong, and was much vexed at it. " Come, let us ſee," ſaid her brother; " let us look at it;" at the ſame time trying to take it out of my hand; but I would not let him have it, for fear he ſhould diſcover my little falſehood. During this debate he held my hand in his, and preſſed it very tenderly in ſpite of the efforts I made to diſengage myſelf from him. At length he left me, becauſe a friend of his, a

young Engliſhman, whoſe name was London, was announced. I ſhall mention this Engliſhman another time, as it is too late at preſent, and I am going to bed.

LETTER III.

How ſhall I give my dear mamma any idea of the aſtoniſhment I yeſterday experienced, when I found myſelf in the city I mentioned to you? or how ſhall I be able to deſcribe the great ſtreets filled with people who put me out of countenance by ſtaring at me. It was thought beſt for us to go on foot, that I might ſee the city the more eaſily. They conducted me to the harbour, where I was amazed to ſee ſuch numbers of people, and the quantity of ſhips which were every minute going out and coming in; the noiſe and tumult I heard are ſtill in my ears; and my ideas are not compoſed enough to let me give you a particular account of what I ſaw. It

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is quite a ſcene of confuſion that I cannot unravel; and the only effects of this noiſy day is, that I am at this time very much tired, and have a terrible pain in my head. I did not find myſelf more at eaſe in the houſe where I dined; there ſeemed to be almoſt as great a crowd as there was in the ſtreets. I aſked why M. de Turnoff had ſo many people with him? They told me he had not uſually ſo many; but that the greateſt part of thoſe I ſaw were come to ſee me. "You "joke," ſaid I to the younger Sping, who had told me ſo.—"Why, Madam," anſwered he, "have you any doubts of "it? You are too diffident; I can aſ- "ſure you, if any ſuch thing happened "to our ladies, the generality of them "would be far from diſbelieving it."— "Now you mention the ladies," ſaid I to him; "your ſiſter Mirza has ſhewn "me one of your acquaintance, who "appears to me to be very handſome "and very agreeable."—"That may "be," ſaid he; "but I have only ſeen "one to-day, and it is not ſhe that you

"mean to point out to me."——We were interrupted here by the company, and among the reſt by the young Engliſhman I mentioned to you. I knew that he was an admirer of Mirza's, but that nothing was as yet determined as to their marriage. He wanted to return with us to our houſe, but Madame Sping objected to it, which a little vexed poor Mirza.

At ſupper they were talking of all the people that had come to ſee me. I complained of it much, and was really diſpleaſed. M. Sping ſenior ſaid, that my ſudden appearance from the Mountain of Evil Spirits had made ſo much noiſe at court, that it had excited the curioſity of the whole city, as we had ſeen. But I am quite tired, my dear mamma; therefore bid you adieu. Alas! you do not hear me, nor do you know that I think of you every moment, and that I wiſh for nothing ſo much as to ſee you again; and that wiſh helps to ſupport my ſpirits.

LETTER IV.

I LEARN to draw, my dear mamma; I have this morning taken a leſſon from the maſter who teaches the young ladies of this family. He comes three times a week to the houſe. But I muſt tell you what determined me ſo ſuddenly to learn this art.

This morning I found fifty pieces of gold on my toilette. I thought it had been left there by accident, and immediately ran to Mirza's room, to aſk her if ſhe knew to whom it belonged. She at firſt pretended to be ſurpriſed, but afterwards ſhe bantered me on the eagerneſs with which I wanted to reſtore the purſe, and at laſt adviſed me to keep it. "How!" ſaid I to her; "you certainly "have not reflected on the advice you "give me; why would you have me "keep a purſe of gold which is not my "own."—"Pardon me," ſaid ſhe, "for "it is your own, and it was I who put it "where you found it. Mamma knows

" nothing of it, and I intreat you to " keep it till you are in a ſituation to " return it me." I expreſſed my gratitude in the moſt lively terms for her generous friendſhip, though at the ſame time I entreated her to take the purſe back again, which was too conſiderable for my wants, and for the little proſpect I had of ever being able to return it to her again. I told her, to ſatisfy her, I would take one of the fifty pieces, which would be ſufficient for me, and that I would not have any more.— When I found ſhe would not take the purſe again, I left it on her table and returned to my own chamber.

As I left my door open, I ſaw the younger M. Sping come to his ſiſter's apartment, and a minute afterwards ſhe came to bring me back the purſe. This made me ſuſpect it was the brother inſtead of the ſiſter who had made me this preſent, and on that account I refuſed ſo much the more taking it from Mirza, who for a long time entreated me to accept it; but at length, finding me determined,

ſhe

ſhe carried it away with her. I had taken an opportunity to put into it the piece of gold which I had at firſt conſented to receive. When ſhe was gone, I ſent directly to M. Suple to come to me, having ſomething to communicate to him. This good Miſſionary had many times given me his advice, and had inſtructed me in the manners and cuſtoms of the country. He had particularly adviſed me to be very careful of my conduct, telling me, the ſmalleſt trifle ſometimes hurt the character of a young woman; and that I ſhould be ſtill more cautious, as, being a ſtranger in that country, I ſhould be judged with more ſeverity. He aſſured me I was in a very reſpectable and polite family, but that it was neceſſary for me to be on my guard with M. Sping jun. who, according to his opinion, was much in love with me, and had intirely left off going to the city ſince I had been at his father's houſe, where, before I came, he was ſuppoſed to have had a paſſion for a young lady who lived there. "I do not think," ſaid he, "there

"is

" is any fear of his abandoning you, as " he has done her, but ſtill it is right " for you to be upon your guard; for let " us ſuppoſe, as I much wiſh, that you " will return to your friends, they will " no doubt make choice of a huſband for " you themſelves; you would then be " very unhappy to find yourſelf attached " to another, as you muſt never forget " that an amiable woman ought to love " no one but her huſband." You know, mamma, that my ignorance on this ſubject had nearly become fatal to me; but now that I know it, do not fear that I ſhall ever be guilty of ſuch a crime. No; I will never love any one beſides my huſband; and if ſo, perhaps I never ſhall love at all.—— I am not likely to have a huſband ſince I have no fortune, and that is an eſſential to the marriage ſtate.———— M. Suple added, that M. Sping was rich, and that he muſt marry a woman who was equally ſo, for that was the cuſtom. Well, with all my heart. However, all theſe circumſtances made me determine

mine to acquaint M. Suple who I am, that he may inform all the good people of this houſe who have received me ſo kindly. "They muſt not be deceived," ſaid I, "and imagine that I am rich, or "of a noble family."

I then related to him my own and your hiſtory, except thoſe circumſtances which induced me to leave you. I made him believe that I loſt myſelf in the foreſt, where I was walking by myſelf, and that inſtead of taking the path which was to conduct me home, I had taken a contrary one, and that the farther I went on I found myſelf at a greater diſtance from home, and at length, after walking for two days, I arrived at the hut, from whence he had the goodneſs to bring me to this houſe. I confeſſed to him that I was ignorant who were my parents, and that you had only mentioned my mother to me, who had been ſhipwrecked with you and that ſhe had died in child-bed of me ſome months after your arrival in the iſland.

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He liſtened with great attention to this hiſtory, and appeared much ſurpriſed at the eſtabliſhment of your family, and the order which reigned in it. He informed me, that your marriage was not valid, and that your children, were they in the world, would be deemed illegitimate, and your right to them diſputed. He afterwards made many reflections, which he did not then communicate to me, but concluded by ſaying, he would not abuſe my confidence, I might be certain; but that he did not think it neceſſary at preſent to acquaint the family of the Spings with all theſe particulars; and in the mean time he would, as I deſired, endeavour to find out ſome genteel employment for me, that I might not always be an expence to my friends. This was the converſation I had with M. Suple the morning I ſent for him to tell him the ſtory concerning the purſe. He was of my opinion, that it was a preſent from the brother inſtead of the ſiſter.

" This

"This does not at all ſurpriſe me," ſaid this good father, when I told him the genteel manner which had been made uſe of to induce me to accept it; "and I "am ſure he will be much concerned if "he finds out that you ſuſpected it to be "his. He is a very noble, generous-"hearted young man." I was very glad to find he had the ſame opinion of M. Sping that I had; though I did not love him more than another, I yet did juſtice to his merits; and certainly he has, independent of his perſon, which is very agreeable, a thouſand amiable qualities. I have ſince that time enquired of this good father, whether he had thought of our laſt converſation, and whether I might hope, through his means, to be taken from the wretched ſituation I was then in.—— "Alas! Sir," ſaid I, "I "never before knew the whole force of "that expreſſion till I came here; I had "only before then heard in general "terms of rich and poor, but had never "demanded an explanation of theſe im-"portant diſtinctions, ſo neceſſary to be

"known

" known by thoſe who live in ſocieties. " To what dangers have I expoſed my- " ſelf in coming here ſo ignorant! I had " need of an honourable and zealous pro- " tector, ſuch as I have found in you. " From the moment you ſaw me, you " received me with the greateſt goodneſs, " you procured me a ſafe and proper " aſylum, you have taught me what I " owe to others as well as myſelf; teach " me now, my reſpected friend, what I " muſt do to make myſelf worthy all " your kindneſs."

" Madam," ſaid he, joining his hands together, and eying me with the tenderneſs of a father, " God will bleſs " you for your noble way of thinking; " he will protect you, he will take care " and procure you the happineſs you " merit; he will complete his work; for " doubt not but it was he who made uſe " of my feeble hands, to give you that " aſſiſtance for which you teſtify ſo much " gratitude. But to return to your queſ- " tion: You aſk me, Madam, whether I

" remember

" remember our laſt converſation? You
" ſhall yourſelf be judge whether I do
" or not. After a long conſideration on
" what I could procure for you to ſup-
" port yourſelf by, I have fixed on paint-
" ing. I think I have an acquaintance
" in the Convent of the Conception,
" who may aſſiſt me in this ſcheme. I
" am going to find her; ſhe is a perſon
" who paints finely in miniature, and
" teaches drawing to the young ladies
" in the Convent. She means to retire
" in a few years, and promiſes to keep
" her place, which is very genteel as
" well as profitable, till you are
" able to ſucceed her. She will perfect
" you in this employ, after you have
" learnt a twelvemonth of the maſter
" who comes three times a week to teach
" the young ladies here. So, Madam,
" you may begin to-day to take a
" leſſon; I have already informed the
" drawing-maſter, but it will be right
" to aſk Madame Sping's permiſſion,
" who I dare ſay will be charmed to
" give you that ſatisfaction. It is not

" neceſſary,

" neceſſary, however, to ſay what uſe " you intend to make of it."

Adieu, my kind, my moſt reſpectable mamma. Do you ſtill love me? Will you always love me?—— I believe you will, becauſe I wiſh it. I will do every thing in my power to deſerve it, and to be able one day or other to aſſure you ſo perſonally. The hope of this ſupports my exiſtence.

LETTER V.

THREE days have paſſed without my writing to you, that I might give all my time to drawing. My dear mamma, could you but ſee how much I wiſh to learn! I would do nothing elſe but paint. I have already waſted much paper; this is all I can yet do, for I do not believe the compliments which the younger M. Sping makes me on this ſubject, though every body ſays I have a good genius. There is a great deal of company here to-day, and among others,

others, M. London, Mirza's lover, with another Engliſh gentleman of his acquaintance. I heard them reproaching young Sping with never coming to the city to ſee them. He excuſed himſelf very modeſtly, by ſaying that his mother wiſhed him to attend more to buſineſs. This reply made the young men ſmile, and I perceived that they ſuſpected me to be the cauſe of his not viſiting them as uſual. But what does it ſignify if it turns out well? One good effect I am ſure it has, that it gives his mother great pleaſure to find her ſon has withdrawn himſelf from a ſtate of diſſipation, which ſhe greatly feared he was too deeply engaged in. I think alſo, that this change in M. Sping's behaviour will be much better for him, and it cannot bring any cenſure upon me. This is M. Suple's opinion, as well as mine, for I conſulted him on the ſubject: I told him my ſcruples, as well as the manner in which I had acted towards the young man, whoſe behaviour to me was very polite and reſpectful; at the ſame time

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he neglected nothing which he thought would oblige me, and that he intereſted himſelf much about me, and extolled me very highly, though he liked to play me ſome little tricks, and to romp with me as he did with his ſiſters, but he never came into my chamber without them, or his father and mother. When I firſt came here, I uſed to walk in the garden with him; but ſince I had M. Suple's advice, I never went there alone; for which M. Sping reproached me: I made my drawing a pretext for not going, aſſuring him it employed my whole morning.

I think we ſhall ſoon loſe Mirza; her marriage will ſhortly take place; ſhe is very much taken up in preparing for it. I wiſh ſhe may be happy; but alas! I dare not think it. M. London, I fear, is not what he ought to be.— She is gentle, mild, polite, and generous, but her intended huſband does not appear to me to poſſeſs one of theſe amiable qualities; at leaſt, he has not that appearance of politeneſs and delicacy which points out a noble heart. He negociates about her fortune without

without any regard to herſelf, though he tells her he prefers her to every other woman in the world. Poor Mirza believes him becauſe ſhe loves him, and perſiſts in marrying him in ſpite of all his faults; to all appearance ſhe is blind to them, though the whole family for a long time have oppoſed their union. But it ſeems her mother begins to yield to the importunities of the young man, and the entreaties of her daughter. I am very ſorry for it, for I love this dear girl, and ſhe is beloved by all her family. How is it poſſible, with all her amiable qualities, ſhe can love a man who probably will not regard her the more for being poſſeſſed of ſuch advantages! I was making this remark yeſterday to her brother, who joined me in regretting her infatuation. My aſking him this queſtion, drew from him an anſwer which confuſed me much. "Love, Madam," ſaid he, "of which you are ignorant— "love conquers all difficulties, and "unites the greateſt contradictions; I "mean that blind paſſion which my ſiſ-

"ter

" ter feels for M. London : but that love " which is enlightened, and worthy the " adored object, is the true love which " I feel, and which can only be happy " when it inſpires a mutual paſſion."— I made him no anſwer, as I avoid all converſations of this kind. I muſt not love M. Sping, becauſe I cannot marry him; this I repeat to myſelf twenty times a day, and conſequently I avoid every thing which might engage me to diſcover the tranſient ſentiments of his heart, which opportunity perhaps and the ſituation I am in, may have inſpired him with. I concluded this converſation by ſpeaking to little Sophia who was with me. M. Sping appeared to be much vexed at my behaviour, and I ſaw him change colour and go out of the garden inſtantly. I confeſs I was very ſorry for it, and was very impatient to ſee him return to the ſaloon, where the company were then all aſſembled. This is not the time, thought I, to go to the plantations, reckoning the hours he had been abſent; and if he were gone to the city his family

would know it, and I ſhould have heard it mentioned. I was vexed that nobody ſeemed diſturbed at his abſence, and I know not what prevented me from breaking the ſilence which all the company ſeemed to keep on a ſubject which was ſo important for me to know. At laſt I diſcovered what I wanted to hear: There came in an Engliſh gentleman whom I had often ſeen at the houſe before; he immediately inquired of Madame Sping where her ſon was. "My "ſon!" ſaid ſhe, looking round her as if ſhe had not perceived his abſence before; "I know not where he is; but I "dare ſay he will be here preſently, he "cannot be far off, ſo pray ſit down, Sir," ſaid ſhe; and they then talked of indifferent things. M. Harture, which was the name of the gentleman, took the opportunity of a minute's ſilence to aſk me whether M. Sping had been long gone out? I had the folly to bluſh at this queſtion, which I anſwered by ſaying I knew nothing of him, and I continued my work without looking off

it. "Permit me to tell you, my dear "young lady, this is a very vague an- "ſwer."— "It is true, however, Sir," ſaid I. "I believe it, ſince you tell me "ſo," ſaid he; "for what reaſon could "you have for deceiving me? Yet I "cannot help having ſome doubts, "which I might better have diſcovered "if you had not kept your fine eyes "fixed on your work." I got up on this, and told him coldly, I did not like to be queſtioned, and begged him to change the converſation. He appeared a little diſconcerted, and after making many apologies, joined in a general converſation, to which I particularly attended, and took care to addreſs myſelf to him with more than uſual civility. Mirza, who had heard what paſſed between us, told me this morning, that he had deſired her to repeat his excuſes in ſuch a manner that I ſhould grant his pardon, and aſſured me he was much concerned to have offended me. "It is very indif- "ferent to me," ſaid I; "I have no "malice againſt a perſon whom I do not "regard."

" regard."——" O that is the moſt " ſevere thing you can ſay," replied Mirza. " I thank you for that," ſaid I; " for this M. Harture is the moſt " contradicting mortal on earth."—" He " torments me," ſaid ſhe, " much " more; but I ſee it is becauſe I am too " good to him. I ſhall for the future act " as you have done; it appears to me " excellent, and my brother is of the " ſame opinion, and has been much di- " verted at it."—" What then," ſaid I, " you have told your brother?"—" Yes, " why ſhould I not; he is ſo much in- " tereſted in every thing which regards " you, that I was certain it would give " him pleaſure; and beſides, he had " need of ſomething to divert him, for " ſince yeſterday he has been remarkably " grave and melancholy. I know not " what has made him ſo, and aſked him " whether he was ill, which I feared " was the caſe, but he aſſured me he was " in perfect health." Adieu! my dear mamma; it is very late.

LETTER VI.

MANY days have paſſed, my dear mamma, and many things have happened, ſince I wrote to you laſt; and firſt of all, the marriage of Mirza, which was at firſt celebrated in a very private manner, but afterwards there were ſo many dinners, ſuppers, and balls, that I am quite tired. I greatly prefer the life you lead to all theſe buſtling entertainments; however I muſt give you ſome account of them: After the ceremony was performed, we all went to the city to M. Tarnoff's, and ſtaid there three days. We had two balls at his houſe, and a very ſuperb dinner on board a ſhip, with illuminations and fire-works. I ſhould have been much more pleaſed if any other perſon than M. Harture had given this entertainment; but it was he who did it, as commanding officer in the navy, and a friend of M. Sping.

But

But he ſo much fatigued me by his compliments, and his attentions were ſo pointed to make known to the company that this feaſt was given on my account, that it has given me a laſting hatred to this kind of entertainment; nevertheleſs, Madame Sping, whom I never quitted, and M. Suple, who was informed of every thing, both ſay, I behaved with the utmoſt propriety, and pleaſed the whole company which were very numerous: I know not why, but M. Sping the younger particularly gave me his thanks. I was greatly pleaſed with having merited the approbation of all thoſe I love and eſteem; but I muſt own I was not ſatisfied with the behaviour or intentions of M. Harture; and it is certain, if he wiſhed to pleaſe me, he took a very wrong method. Madame Sping greatly regrets the loſs of her dear Mirza; I partake in her grief, and never leave her, particularly at thoſe times when her daughter uſed to be with her, and have intreated her to let me ſupply her place to her as much as I poſſibly can. This

attention gives her great pleaſure. Her father, brother, and ſiſter alſo, all lament her abſence, and we ſeem to want ſomething of our uſual ſociety. Why is it that friends who agree ſo well ſhould be obliged to part? The reflection which theſe circumſtances brought to my mind ſaddened my heart and afflicted me bitterly. When I ſaw this good mother weeping for the loſs of her daughter, I could not help ſaying to myſelf, "Alas! "I alſo have a good mamma, who re- "grets my abſence, and is ſtill more af- "flicted than Madame Sping, becauſe "ſhe is entirely ignorant of what is be- "come of the child ſhe brought up with "the tenderneſs of the moſt careful mo- "ther." Can you, my dear mamma, ever forgive the inconſiſtency of my temper, which made me abandon all I held moſt dear to me on earth, in order to withdraw from the ſhame which I could not ſupport myſelf under whilſt near you. I now ſee my fault in a different light, and tremble when I think of the danger to which I expoſed myſelf

when

when I left you. I as yet ſee no appearance of bringing my ſcheme to bear, which I have ſecretly formed; but the ſole idea of one day ſucceeding in it, ſupports my ſpirits.

LETTER VII.

For a fortnight paſt that we have been here, we have not gone out of the houſe except now and then for a walk in the environs; ſo that I have nothing new to relate to my dear mamma. I can only tell you that there is a great alteration in the behaviour of the younger M. Sping. Since his ſiſter's marriage, he goes every day to the city, and we ſee him only at meal-times; when he ſtays but a very little time, in order that he may return from whence he came. I cannot divine where it is he ſpends the reſt of the day. What aſtoniſhes me is, that his mother does not make herſelf uneaſy, as ſhe uſed to do, at his frequent viſits to the city, which now appear to be more

ſo than ever; yet ſhe takes no notice of it. I conclude, it is becauſe ſhe thinks he is always with his ſiſter; but I cannot perſuade myſelf but he has other reaſons for going ſo often, beſides viſiting her. For that matter, it is not my buſineſs, and I have no other concern in it but what proceeds from the intereſt I take in all that affects this good family, to whom I am under ſuch great obligations, and to whom I find myſelf more and more attached, to Madame Sping in particular, who treats me as if I were her own child, and ſince Mirza married always calls me her eldeſt daughter. I on my part do all in my power to deſerve ſo flattering a title, and to merit her kindneſs. Now I mention being called her daughter, it naturally leads me to think of her ſon; and I cannot conceive why he ſeems ſo pleaſed to hear her call me daughter: by that I ſhould judge he was very indifferent to me, although he wanted to perſuade me otherwiſe: but perhaps he wiſhed me to pleaſe his mother, and had his views for me to make court

to

to her. What I imagine is this: If he ſhould marry, and, like his ſiſter, be eſtabliſhed in the city, he might perhaps be very well pleaſed to leave with his mother, of whom he is very fond, a friend to conſole and in ſome degree make her amends for the abſence of her children. I can no otherwiſe account for the joy which I obſerve in his countenance when his mother calls me daughter. Be that as it will, I greatly applaud myſelf for not having given credit to all the fine ſpeeches he has made me, and to believe, as he aſſured me, that the whole happineſs of his life was to pleaſe me. Even M. Suple was deceived; for he told me he thought he was very much in love with me.

I can aſſure you, my dear mamma, all theſe reflections make him appear in a diſadvantageous light to me. What end could his diſſimulation turn to? Would it not have been better for him to have ſaid to me, "Attach yourſelf "to my mother; all our family will "think themſelves obliged to you; we

" ſhall every one of us love you for " it."

This idea puts me quite out of humour; beſides which, I do not make that rapid progreſs in drawing which I hoped for. I have even neglected it for ſome days paſt; and I find myſelf quite tired to death. I have no employment that pleaſes me, and conſequently I ſee no longer any reſource by which I may ſupport myſelf without being an expence to any one. In ſhort, I am returned to my firſt wretchedneſs, and am as much more unhappy as I had thought to be leſs. But it is my own fault, mamma; and if you do not pity me, I ought not to complain: I ought never to have abandoned you. O! that I could one day find myſelf again with you; nothing on earth ſhould ſeparate me from you.

Adieu, my beſt, my tender mother! I am grieved by my own reflections: When I leave off writing to you, I ſhall find myſelf alone. It ſeems, I know not why, but it ſeems as if I were entirely deſerted; I belong to no one in the univerſe;

univerſe; I care for nothing; I wiſh I were dead! What is it I do on earth? What have I done? — Afflict my beſt friends by my extravagant conduct. O! my dear mamma, this paper is wet with my tears; you perhaps will never ſee it; I am now in deſpair, ſince I cannot ſucceed in the ſtudy of which I thought to be miſtreſs; I expected by theſe means to have got money, and with that money I ſhould have been able to have found ſomebody who would have undertaken to carry my letters to you. I could perhaps have pretty nearly pointed out the road by which I came hither; I ſhould perhaps have come myſelf; but my hopes are now all baniſhed. Adieu, my dear mamma; pity your poor child!

LETTER VIII.

When I wrote to you yeſterday, my dear mamma, I was very melancholy; I have not ſlept to night, and have been ill all the morning. But the affectionate

tenderneſs with which all this family has treated me, has given me ſo much pleaſure, that at preſent I feel nothing but the ſatisfaction of being beloved, truly beloved, by theſe kind friends. Could you but have ſeen how uneaſy they were, and how deſirous to render me every ſervice in their power! They never left me, but ſpent the whole day in my chamber; the younger M. Sping ſtaid there as well as the reſt: they made me lie in bed till noon, and then retired while I got up: M. Sping returned one of the firſt, with his ſiſter Sophia; and while ſhe amuſed herſelf at the window, he came and ſat by me, and with an air of tenderneſs took one of my hands, which he preſſed in his, and told me, I had made him very uneaſy in the morning, and that for ſome days paſt he had perceived a little alteration in my temper, which he attributed to my indiſpoſition. I could not at that moment refrain from telling him, that I was aſtoniſhed at his making ſuch a remark, who was ſo diſſipated, and ſtaid ſo little at home.

home. "This diſſipation," ſaid he, "does not take off my attention to you; "on the contrary, my abſence only "brings you the nearer to me."— "This," ſaid I, "is a riddle which "I cannot ſolve; when you think pro- "per, you will explain it to me; and "in the mean time, while I am expect- "ing this proof of your complaiſance, "tell me, how does your ſiſter Madame "London?"—"My ſiſter?" returned he; "I know no more than you do; I "have not ſeen her ſince the entertain- "ments."—"This is another enigma "which I cannot comprehend; but you "are maſter of your own ſecrets, Sir, "and I do not ſeek to dive into them." Although I ſaid this with an affected coldneſs, he looked at me with an air of ſatisfaction which aſtoniſhed me, and ſeemed to want to diſcover by my countenance the ſentiment by which I was at that moment affected. Immediately after, he ſaid to me with a ſigh, "What plea- "ſure ſhould I have had to diſcover to "you the ſecret which I keep ſecure in

"the

" the bottom of my heart; but it would " be ill received, ſince you have not " been able to diſcover it."—" Well," ſaid I in a bantering tone, " I am " going to gueſs it, though without " engaging you to anſwer me. Your " ſecret is an intended marriage, which " employs you ſo much the more as it is " nearly concluded. Is it not that which " has given you ſuch an air of abſence " for ſome time paſt, and which obliged " you to go every day to the city?"— " No, lovely Ninette," ſaid he, " you " do not believe any ſuch thing," looking at me with tenderneſs; " or I muſt " have been very awkward, to have " given you an idea ſo contrary to my " heart."—At this time we were joined by little Sophia; and her father and mother both entered the room.

What can he mean by this ſecret which I ought to have divined, and which is not what I imagined? It employs my mind the whole day to think of it. I obſerved he had the appearance of being confuſed and uneaſy. In the mean time, while

I am

I am in expectation of having theſe enigmas explained, I am going to bed leſs melancholy than I was laſt night, as my health is better. Adieu, my deareſt mamma; may Heaven protect you!

LETTER IX.

This morning M. Suple came into my room under pretence of aſking after my health, but in reality to make me a propoſal of marriage, which greatly aſtoniſhed me. Could you believe it? it was M. Harture who charged him with this ſtrange commiſſion; I certainly ſhall not agree to it. He doubtleſs thinks me rich, and of a good family, or he would not have deigned to look on me. I have already told you, my dear mamma, that he came here very often, in order perhaps to ſee what effect his ſuperb entertainment had on me. What he thought after ſeeing me, I cannot tell; but I am very ſure that it did not increaſe my regard for him: all

which

which I honeſtly confeſſed to M. Suple, who repreſented to me the advantages of ſuch an offer, but did not enforce it, as I expected, with much energy.

" Pray," ſaid I, " does this Gentle-
" man, who does me the honour to make
" me this offer, take any pains to in-
" quire whether I can love him? But
" I ſuppoſe that is wholly indifferent to
" him; he is vain enough and rich
" enough to ſuppoſe that every woman
" he would marry muſt love him. No,
" M. Suple, believe me, M. Harture
" ſhall never be my huſband."—This determination made his ambaſſador ſmile, and he owned afterwards he much approved it. " I have executed my com-
" miſſion," ſaid he; " and now I will
" tell you what I think of it. M. Har-
" ture's propoſals are not ſo honourable
" as he would have you believe: he had
" made ſuch conditions to his marriage
" with you, as I am certain you would
" never accept. He would have you
" for ſome time live in ſome genteel
" houſe in the city, where he may have

" the

" the liberty of viſiting you, that you " may get more acquainted with each " other before you engage in the indiſ- " ſoluble ties of marriage."—" This " precaution," ſaid I, " is very pru- " dent; but as my ſentiments are al- " ready decided, you may tell him that " I abſolutely refuſe his offer, and deſire " he will think no more of it."—I after- wards deſired M. Suple would explain to me what was meant by this faſhion of aſking a young woman in marriage.— The good man was under great difficulty how to comply with my requeſt; and indeed he was right; for notwithſtand- ing he took care to keep within the bounds of decency in his explanation, I bluſhed many times, and often inter- rupted him, to point out to him my in- dignation, and it was with great diffi- culty he appeaſed my anger, by ſaying all in his power to aſſure me he did not think M. Harture's views were ſo cri- minal as his propoſals ſeemed to indicate, and that he had mentioned the depravity of the morals of the young men of the

city

city in general, but that there were many exceptions; and could he be accuſed of ſuch intentions, it would immediately exclude him from the houſe of Madame Sping. "He is a young officer," ſaid he, "who is every where well received, "and lives in a magnificent manner; "his relations are very rich, and never "let him want money. Hitherto he "has not been cenſured for his conduct, "except for ſome youthful follies which "are but too eaſily tolerated amongſt "people of his rank, who think them-"ſelves authoriſed to ſeduce young and "innocent perſons, and to boaſt of their "ſucceſs. This bad conduct, which often "makes them neglect their duties, "ſometimes leads them to the worſt of "crimes."— "And what," ſaid I, "be-"comes of theſe poor young creatures "whom they ſacrifice to their plea-"ſures?"— "They become miſerable "as ſoon as they are abandoned," replied M. Suple; "thoſe who become "ſenſible of their crime ſpend their lives "in lamenting it, and in endeavour-

"ing

" ing by a better conduct to make it " forgot."—" How ſhocking is this," cried I, " that the moſt noble ſentiment, " the law of nature, ſhould be thus " profaned and made vile!— O! M. " Suple, keep me from ſuch wicked ſe- " ducers; carry me to that houſe which " you told me of, where young per- " ſons of my ſex are in ſafety, and per- " fectly ſeparated from men and their " deluſive ſnares. I conjure you to " procure me this happy retreat, or if " you would do me a ſtill greater favour, " you may furniſh me with means to re- " turn to my Deſert." Here he interrupted me, by ſaying I took him up too quickly and too generally as to what he ſaid of mankind; that they were not all bad; that he knew a great many who had honour enough to reſpect virtue, and even to pay homage to it.

" Do not," ſaid this good old man, " think of changing your habitation; " conduct yourſelf as you have hitherto " done, and be perfectly eaſy. The " Lord will protect you, and I will

" guard

" guard you from danger. Truſt in " Him, and depend on my care. I will " give M. Harture a proper anſwer. I " was very certain, before I heard you, " what your reply would be; but it was " neceſſary to acquaint you with his de- " ſigns, that you might be upon your " guard againſt coming to any compro- " miſe with him." He went away, entreating me not to make myſelf uneaſy at my ſituation, for that I was ſurrounded by my friends. I told him I did not doubt it, but was vexed at his going from me before I had expreſſed my gratitude. My heart was affected with his kindneſs, and ſo ſoftened, that if he had turned back to look at me he would have found me in tears. What melancholy reflections did I not afterwards make on the enormous folly I was guilty of in quitting you, my dear mamma! By loſing you I loſe every thing! You alone could inſtruct me, improve me, and conduct me in the paths of virtue—you who have ſo conſtantly obeyed its dictates. I have failed in the duty I owed you as a parent.

parent. I have ſeparated myſelf from a reſpected family, who had adopted me and treated me as a beloved child; I was regarded with affection by all thoſe friends, whom I left in order to come into a ſtrange country, where I knew nobody. Am I not at this time in a dangerous ſituation? and perhaps might, ere now, have been in a moſt contemptible one, had not chance fortunately led me to this amiable and reſpectable family, who received me ſo kindly, and treat me with ſuch regard. How confuſed and how humbled ſhould I be at this propoſal of M. Harture's, were it not for thoſe reſpectable friends, who guard me from the criminal purſuits which young women unprotected are liable to, and may ſo eaſily fall into! Adieu! my deareſt—my beſt mamma.

LETTER X.

How unjuſt have I been, my dear mamma, in accuſing the younger M. Sping of going every day to the city!—

If

If you knew what he was employed about at the time I ſuſpected he was thinking of marriage!— He was giving proofs of the moſt tender eſteem for me. The forſaken and half-demoliſhed cottage where I ſtopped on my firſt arrival in this country, is ſo much connected with a time that proved ſo intereſting to him as he told me, that he was determined to perpetuate the remembrance of it, by preſerving the remains of the hut. They have conducted this affair ſo as to make it an agreeable ſurpriſe, which I felt very ſenſibly. For ſome days they had prepared for this entertainment, by telling me that M. Sping had purchaſed a ſmall houſe in the country, where we were to go and dine, previous to its being ready to receive us for a longer time. M. and Madame London were alſo invited, together with their old uncle, and a niece who lived with him, beſides five or ſix friends of M. and Madame Sping's, and the black gentleman who had behaved with ſo much care and attention to me at the time of my fainting. The

company

company were all aſſembled when we got there.

It is impoſſible for me to expreſs the pleaſure and ſurpriſe it gave me to ſee the great alteration made in this deſerted cottage, where I had once been without one ſingle friend or acquaintance. How different was that hour of diſtreſs from the preſent, when I was ſurrounded and entertained by a great number of perſons who took a pleaſure in the joy they afforded me! I embraced Madame Sping, but could not expreſs my gratitude any other way than by tears. She anſwered me in the ſame manner, preſſing me to her boſom. A ſigh at that time eſcaped me; it was for you, my dear mamma.

When ſhall I receive from you ſuch teſtimonies of affection? Why was you not here to partake of this entertainment? Your preſence would have ſtill more adorned it, and made it more pleaſing in my eyes. This was my conſtant wiſh every moment of the day, which was celebrated with ſo much gaiety.

But

But I ought to give you a more circumſtantial account: Yeſterday was the day fixed for dining at this country-houſe. It was agreed that I ſhould be dreſſed exactly as I was the day I arrived there, that is, like a little pilgrim, with my baſket at my girdle, and my turtle-dove on my wriſt or in my pocket. In this dreſs I arrived with M. and Madame Sping at this pleaſant though ſolitary cottage. Some delightful muſic which ſounded at a diſtance ſerved to make every thing ſeem agreeable as I advanced. I then recollected the remains of the poor hut, which now appeared ſtanding by a grand pavilion, which they made me enter amidſt the acclamations of all the company, who ſung ſome verſes made on account of my arrival, and the day on which they were celebrating it. It was then that I embraced Madame Sping, as I have told you; and after this ſcene of tenderneſs had ſubſided, ſhe told me it was her huſband and ſon who had prepared this agreeable ſurpriſe for me, and that ſhe had promiſed

miſed to keep their ſecret. They then made me read an inſcription written in letters of gold over the door, which was to ſay, as I before mentioned, that my arrival in that place was ſo intereſting and happy an event to my friends, that they had erected this building in order to perpetuate the remembrance of it. I was unable to bear ſuch proofs of their kindneſs, and threw myſelf at their feet, intreating them to ſpare me, and to conſider, that I did not deſerve ſuch diſtinguiſhing marks of their goodneſs. They all got up and embraced me: I ſay all, becauſe the younger M. Sping ſhed tears when he embraced me with his father and mother; and indeed, my dear mamma, I never felt a more pleaſing ſenſation than when I received ſuch a proof of this amiable young man's ſenſibility, the remembrance of which will never be effaced from my memory. But you muſt hear all the particulars of this delightful day: The worthy M. Sping gave me his hand to lead me to a ſopha, over which was placed my picture at full

length, in my travelling dreſs, with my dove on my wriſt. I afterwards went into a little room, decorated with great taſte, which led me to a beautiful little garden, ornamented with all kinds of flowers peculiar to that country in their ſeaſons; a cheerful band of muſic played all the time of dinner, the honours of which they inſiſted on my doing, and I endeavoured to acquit myſelf as well as I could, but was under greater difficulty how to anſwer all the flattering things they ſaid to me, than to ſerve my friends at table. I was really quite aſhamed of the praiſes they beſtowed on me; but the greateſt ſurpriſe was reſerved for me till after dinner.

I have not told you, that not ſeeing M. Suple among the gueſts, I had aſked Madame Sping the reaſon of it; ſhe told me we ſhould ſee him after dinner. He came juſt as we were getting up from table. He was accompanied by all the black people whom I had ſeen at the door of my hut on my firſt arrival, and who terrified me ſo much. I ſcarce know how

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continually I ſtruggle with myſelf to conceal my affection for a man to whom I wiſh to appear indifferent. If I had — ah! why have I not an immenſe fortune, even a crown to offer him! I would lay it at his feet, and I ſhould think I could never do enough to deſerve ſo noble and ſo tender a heart! If you knew all that he does to oblige me, you would judge of him as I do; his whole employment ſeems to be to give me pleaſure; he appears to think and to exiſt only for me. The converſation I had with his ſiſter makes me ſuſpect that the money I received for my drawings was an invention of his to make me eaſy. If it be ſo, as I can ſcarce doubt, M. Suple is equally concerned in this kind artifice. But how can I be certain? I have no way but by batraying Madame London, whoſe intelligence I have promiſed to keep ſecret. I muſt therefore act as if I had no ſuſpicion of the matter. This reſerve diſtreſſes me: I bluſh at the thought of concealing my gratitude: It is a more humiliating

ating ſituation than that which I wiſh to avoid. I can write no more at preſent; my tears blind me. Adieu! my dear mamma.

I muſt however tell you, that the elder M. Sping ſets out in three or four days for Batavia, where he has relations. Madame London tells me he goes there to ſettle ſome family affairs.

LETTER XII.

The people, my dear mamma, ſet out yeſterday in order to find out your dwelling. I am continually praying that they may diſcover your ſolitary habitation, which contains all that I have deareſt to me on earth; I have given them all my papers, and M. Sping has written you a letter; I would have gone with them, but every body oppoſed it; they have ſo terrified me with their account of the riſks I ran in coming here, that at laſt I conſented they ſhould go without me. I ſhall count the hours, as

Madame

Madame Sping does thoſe ſince the departure of her huſband; every one wiſhes his return. They are a family like yours, my dear mamma, for their way of thinking; they are tender parents, good friends, and lovers of hoſpitality: What happineſs would it afford me, could I one day unite you to them, or at leaſt bring you acquainted! You would love Madame Sping, and M. d'Ermancour would ſoon be the friend of the whole family; I often talk to them of you, and my wiſhes on this ſubject. Since I told them your hiſtory, M. Sping the younger delights to hear me give an account of your way of living, and mine when I was with you; he always concludes by ſaying that he envies M. d'Ermancour, and is certain that happineſs is always complete with the perſon one loves. "If my hopes," ſaid he the other day, "are not deceived; "if I am happy enough to ſubdue the "heart of the only perſon I adore, I "ſhould envy no one on earth, and "with her every place ſhe ſhould make

"choice

" choice of, or that deſtiny ſhould oblige " her to live in, would be agreeable to " me; a cabin with her would appear " more delightful than the nobleſt palace " without her."—" That might be," ſaid I, " if you had been born in a de- " ſert; but the cuſtoms and conveni- " ences of the country you inhabit, and " the duty you owe to your parents, " who will certainly have made choice " of a companion for you—" " No," ſaid he, " my parents will never have " the diſpoſal of my heart; it is already " given:" and he looked earneſtly in my face, to ſee if he could diſcover what effect his avowal had made upon me. I was much confuſed, and could only caſt down my eyes and bluſh. " Yes, " lovely Ninette," ſaid he, " I have " given away my heart to the moſt " beautiful of her ſex, without her con- " ſent, and without knowing whether " ſhe will approve my temerity; with- " out any hope, and I might even ſay " without any appearance, of having " gained her affection." He then

ſtopped

ſtopped and looked at me; my eyes were fixed on him; I ſaw him ſhed tears; they penetrated my heart; I fancied he was unfortunate in the object of his love: "How much do I pity you!" ſaid I with the utmoſt innocence; "how "deeply does your grief affect me! and "how much have I been till now miſ-"taken with regard to you! I thought "you one of the happieſt of men, as in-"deed you deſerve to be."—"If you "did think ſo, adorable Ninette," ſaid he, "comfort this timid heart, which "fears to have only inſpired you with "indifference. I can no longer be re-"ſtrained," ſaid he, throwing himſelf at my feet; "it is you, and you only, "whom I adore, and who can by one "word inſure my happineſs, or render "me the moſt unfortunate of men."— "What is it I hear, M. Sping? Have "you conſidered what you ſay? Is it in "my power to fix your deſtiny? I that "am a ſtranger to you, that am nobody, "and poſſeſs nothing in the world; who "have ſcarce an exiſtence, and am only

"ſupported

" ſupported by the goodneſs and gene-
" roſity of your——" " This is too
" much," ſaid he, interrupting me;
" I cannot permit this exceſs of mo-
" deſty, which makes you ſpeak ſo
" ſlightly of the moſt perfect and moſt
" noble work of nature: you are fit to
" reign as ſovereign over that world
" where you think you belong to no
" one. My dear, my adored Ninette,
" do not reject a heart which is wholly
" yours; do not ſuffer me to deſpair by
" your indifference; ſuffer me to think
" you will not always be inſenſible; ſay,
" moſt lovely of women, you will give
" me permiſſion to hope: I once enjoyed
" a moment of happineſs, and cannot
" without tranſport recollect the time
" when I fancied your heart was affect-
" ed; I thought I perceived it when
" my lips touched that beautiful mouth,
" at the ſame time fearing to take away
" its enchanting ſweetneſs and colour.
" Do not bluſh, charming Ninette;
" do not repent having given me hap-
" pineſs for one inſtant."—" I ſhall

" never

" never repent," ſaid I, " having given " you a proof of my extreme gratitude; " I ſhould hate myſelf if I thought I was " ever capable of forgetting what I owe " to you and your family."—" Grati- " tude!" ſaid he with impatience; " al- " ways gratitude! How cold is that ſenti- " ment compared with the paſſion I feel " for you! Can the moſt tender, the " moſt reſpectful, the moſt ardent at- " tachment, the entire ſurrender of a " heart which adores you, obtain no- " thing from you but gratitude? Has " that heart, which I ſaw for one moment " ſoftened in my favour, has it deceived " me? And was I miſtaken in thinking " that I ſaw ſometimes in thoſe beautiful " eyes, a ſentiment more favourable to " me than gratitude? What! my lovely " friend, tears! Oh! if they were ſhed " for me! if love makes them flow! " This hand which you give to me aſ- " ſures me of it. Come then to my " arms, thou moſt adorable of women."

Alas! my dear mamma, what will you think of your child when you read this letter,

letter, to ſee me depending on the honour of a man you have no knowledge of. But be aſſured this enchanting lover, who drew from me the ſecret of my heart, reſpects my virtue; my fears and uneaſineſs, which I could not conceal when I found myſelf preſſed in his arms, ſoon abated the pleaſure which my confeſſion had excited; he left me at a little diſtance, and entreated me on his knees to be calm and liſten to him. "Riſe," ſaid I, "for Heaven's ſake riſe; I can hear "nothing more; I muſt go from hence;" and I went immediately out of the room. I remained in my own chamber till ſupper-time; neither tears, nor my reflections on what had paſſed, though ſometimes conſoling and ſometimes melancholy, were able to calm my mind; I was humbled, mortified, and even a little piqued againſt M. Sping for having torn this ſecret from me. Why did he perſiſt in making me confeſs I loved him? What can he mean by, or hope from an acknowledgment which he ought not to have required of me without the conſent of his parents and in their

their preſence? Does he imagine obtaining my heart will make me forget what I owe to virtue? No, he cannot believe it; that heart, which has without diſguiſe confeſſed it loved him, will never yield itſelf to ſhame. But am I not unjuſt in ſuſpecting him? How ſeverely have I judged him! How ungrateful have I been! So good, ſo noble, ſo virtuous a man, who, ſince I have been here, has never once deceived me, has never in a ſingle inſtance been guilty of falſehood; who has given me ſo many proofs of the moſt tender attachment; who has given up all his pleaſures, his inclinations, and every thing he took delight in before my arrival; and this is he whom I ſo unjuſtly ſuſpect, the moſt charming of men, whom I am finding ſuch fault with. I bluſh at my own injuſtice. Pardon, dear object of my affection, pardon thoſe fears which my heart diſowns; you would not injure me; you would not ſeek to humble me. But alas! is it in your power to realize all thoſe flattering titles which you laviſhed

viſhed on me in the enthuſiaſm of your paſſion? You called me your friend, your wife, your beloved companion. May I ever hope to be entitled to thoſe dear names? Shall I ever be the wife of this man ſo ſought after by all the women of Achem, and this beautiful couſin of his with a large fortune? I even ought to decline it, were he to offer to make me ſuch ſacrifices; were I as diſintereſted as he is, I ought to leave the place; I owe it alſo to the ſatisfaction of his parents, who will one day reproach themſelves with having ſo kindly received me. But I can never take ſuch a cruel reſolution; the ties which connect me to him are ſtronger than thoſe of reaſon: I no longer am ſenſible; I even deteſt that heroic greatneſs of mind which chimerical honour inſpires; I am not noble-minded, but I will be honeſt and virtuous; I will not go from hence. The ſcheme I made uſe of to abandon you, my dear mamma, coſt me too much pain; I will not a ſecond time quit the houſe of my friends and protectors, without acquaint-

acquainting them, and applying to them for advice and aſſiſtance, ſhould ſuch a ſtep become neceſſary.

Adieu, my deareſt mamma; I am oppreſſed with ſorrow, but will ſoon reſume this intereſting ſtory.

LETTER XIII.

M. SPING, when he quitted me, retired to his own apartment, which he did not leave till he was told ſupper was ready. We met as we entered the ſaloon; he preſented his hand to me, and at the ſame time had the addreſs to ſlide a letter into it, which I had ſcarce time to put in my pocket before I reached the company, who unfortunately were very numerous; I ſay unfortunately, becauſe they had ſeen neither of us ſince dinner, and might imagine, by our coming in together, that we had not quitted each other ſince that time; I was the more uneaſy becauſe M. Harture was there. I have already informed you of this young man's propoſals,

poſals, and his making an entertainment for me;- and that he had already been making ſome ſevere remarks on the retired life which M. Sping led ſince I had been at his father's houſe. All this, added to the tête-à-tête we had juſt had, and the letter juſt received, increaſed my confuſion, from which, happily, Madame London drew me by making me ſit next her.

We were very cheerful at ſupper, of which M. Sping did the honours, and he had ſuch an appearance of ſatisfaction, that it communicated itſelf to all the company. I promiſed, my dear mamma, that I would tell you all my moſt ſecret thoughts: I will therefore own to you, that I was delighted to ſee and partake of that joy which reigned in the heart where I was ſole miſtreſs. I had never before ſeen him ſo happy. I could not diſſemble as to the cauſe of this extreme gaiety, and had I been in doubt, his looks, which every moment were caſt on me, and told me plainly I was the cauſe of his joy, would have made

made me certain. What paſſed alſo after ſupper delighted me much. A walk was propoſed as the weather was very fine, and the moon ſhone bright. M. Sping, as if without intending, led the company towards the pavilion of the Mountain. We were ſurpriſed at ſome diſtance to hear the ſound of muſic, but ſtill more ſo to ſee this little retirement illuminated within and without, as if for an entertainment. I ought to tell you that for ſome time paſt they had given me the name of Mademoiſelle de Montrouge, becauſe many people called The Mountain of Evil Spirits La Montagne Rouge; and as I came out of the Mountain, M. Sping thought that name ſuited me exactly, ſo they now conſtantly called me by it.

M. Sping was complimented by all the company on the agreeable ſurpriſe he had given us, and the ſecrecy with which he had conducted it: But he told them it was I who had given them this fête, in order to celebrate the day on which I was called Mademoiſelle de Montrouge. This reply, which I did not at all expect, aſtoniſhed me ſo much,

that

that for ſome minutes I was unable to ſpeak, and I was piqued at ſeeing M. Sping enjoy my confuſion. To relieve myſelf from it, I addreſſed myſelf to his good mother, whom I intreated to reprove her ſon for taking pleaſure in laughing at me. "To puniſh him for "it, my dear," ſaid ſhe, "tell him his "fête is neither agreeable nor fine enough "to be attributed as an honour to any "one, ſo that he may, without vanity, "acknowledge himſelf as the author of "it." This trifling converſation, in which M. Harture took a part, coſt me very dear, and had nearly proved fatal to us all: But the pleaſure I enjoyed at that time, was not diſturbed by any fears of what afterwards happened. We danced great part of the night, then walked and had a collation, from which we all retired home much pleaſed, except M. Harture, who, as M. London told me, went away in very ill humour, after a few minutes converſation with M. Sping. I paid no great attention to this remark, being too much delighted with my own

happineſs. During the courſe of the evening I had found an opportunity to read my charming letter, which I here tranſcribe for you.

Letter from M. SPING to MADEMOISELLE DE MONTROUGE.

" You love me, charming Ninette; " you have declared it without ſaying " the words. You have expreſſed it a " thouſand times better by thoſe delicious tears which fell on my boſom. " I would have preſerved them for ever " as a ſacred proof of your love. O do " not deny it, but leave me to enjoy the " felicity. Leave me the pleaſing hope " which I entertained on receiving that " dear hand in mine, which ſhall be the " pledge to unite our hearts. I demanded " on my knees, that hand which you re- " fuſed me, and fled from me in a kind " of terror. What could occaſion you " ſuch fear? The delicacy of ſuch ſen- " timents as you have inſpired me with,

" merit

" merits greater confidence. Search your
" heart, my tender friend, and ſee if it
" does not reproach itſelf; and if I have
" found favour in that heart which I
" adore, grant me the poſſeſſion of it by
" giving me your hand. Give it me as
" a pledge of that faith which I have
" ſworn to you. One word more, my
" dear friend. Give me but this proof
" of your love and confidence, which will
" complete my happineſs and confirm
" it to me for ever. I will only re-
" ceive this precious gift from yourſelf.
" Conſult only your own heart, and fear
" to pierce mine with a fatal wound if
" you refuſe me."

What, my dear mamma, would you have done in my place? What would you have adviſed me to? How much did I wiſh to ſee you, to decide for me in a ſituation ſo delicate! I had not even M. Suple to adviſe with; he is gone a little journey for a few days. Therefore, being deprived of all counſel, I followed that of M. Sping, of this charming man. I liſtened only to my

own heart, and returned the following anſwer:

Letter to M. Sping.

" On your knees, M. Sping!— Riſe, " riſe to receive in your arms the woman " you love, and who adores you. But " before you unite yourſelf to me by ties " which death only can diſſolve, learn who " this unfortunate being is, whom you " would raiſe to your own rank.

" By the ties of nature I belong to no " creature on earth. My mother died in " giving me birth, and left me nothing " but her recommendation to her friend, " to whoſe truly kind and affectionate ten- " derneſs I owe every thing. She brought " me up with all the fondneſs of a mother. " —It is ſhe who has a right to diſpoſe of " that heart which ſhe has formed. But fate " has ordered it otherwiſe, and it yields " itſelf to the moſt worthy and moſt ami- " able of men!— Yes, my dear Sir, this " heart, which is incapable of diſguiſe, " is entirely and for ever your's. I am

" pleaſed

" pleaſed with repeating it, becauſe I am
" ſure it will give you pleaſure to hear it.
" But this hand which you offer me, this
" precious gift which completes my hap-
" pineſs and my pride, will it not offend
" your parents? Shall I not have laſting
" concern for having diſpleaſed them? I
" ſhould deſpiſe myſelf were I ever ſo un-
" juſt and ſo ungrateful as to give them the
" ſmalleſt uneaſineſs.—No, I can never be
" your's without their conſent. Let what
" will happen I ſhall ever be your moſt ten-
" der and ſincere friend, and I ſhall be the
" friend of your parents. They will love
" me as their child, though they might re-
" fuſe to give me that title. I ſhould be as
" one to them, at the time when your new
" engagements would take you from them.
" I ſhall be the comfort of their old age;
" and if I am ſo happy as to recover my
" friends again from the Deſert, and ſee
" them all aſſembled here together, I ſhall
" paſs my life in the boſom of tender
" friendſhip; my whole life ſhall be de-
" voted to their ſervice; I ſhall be con-
" tent if you preſerve a tender attach-

" ment for me, and if I may ſee you with-
" out giving pain to the happy compa-
" nion who is deſtined to live with you.
" My tears, which have wetted this pa-
" per, will prove my weakneſs, and the
" great ſacrifice which I make to grati-
" tude and friendſhip."

I gave this letter to M. Sping when we met at breakfaſt the next morning; he went out directly and ſent us word he had got a letter which he muſt anſwer immediately, and begged we would not wait for him. We therefore ate our breakfaſt, and then ſeparated without his returning. You will eaſily gueſs how my thoughts were employed when I came back to my apartment;—my reflections crowded on me, and the moſt painful ideas affected my mind when I was told that Madame Sping deſired to ſpeak with me. " With me!" ſaid I, with great emotion; " why I left her " but this moment; is ſhe alone?"—" Her ſon only is with her," ſaid the ſervant as he went away. I followed him, troubled, agitated, and trembling; and

to

to increaſe my confuſion, I ſaw as I entered the room, my letter, which I had juſt given to the ſon, in the hands of his mother. At this ſight I fell on my knees andſaid, "Ah, Madam, pardon, pardon "me!"— I could ſay no more, being almoſt ſuffocated, and ready to faint; but this dear lady took me in her arms, and ſaid, "Come, my dear child, come "and embrace thy mother and thy huſ-"band;" and ſhe preſented her ſon to me. O, my dear mamma, your preſence was only wanting to this ſcene of love and tenderneſs! But I ſhould indeed be too happy were every thing to favour my wiſhes. To conclude this intereſting account, when our firſt emotions had ſubſided, Madame Sping made me ſit down between her and her ſon, who took my hand and kiſſed it tenderly, aſking me if I gave it him willingly. I gave him the other, and threw myſelf into his arms, telling him I was too happy at being able, with his mother's conſent, to follow the inclination of my heart.—— "It is you, my dear mother," ſaid he,

looking at her, and preſſing me to his boſom, "who give me what is far dearer "than life! Receive the thanks of a "heart penetrated with the deepeſt gra-"titude."— "Riſe, my ſon," ſaid ſhe, "I inſure my own happineſs by making "your's. Recover yourſelf, and liſten "to me; it is right that this dear girl "ſhould be acquainted with all that con-"cerns you, as from this time her deſ-"tiny is united with your's." She then informed me of what I already knew, of the ſcheme they had of marrying their ſon to M. Turnoff's niece. She was ſo delicate as to paſs lightly over the great fortune he might loſe by refuſing this offer. She afterwards told me, her huſband was gone purpoſely to Batavia to arrange theſe affairs with the young lady's parents; and that it was concerted between him and her uncle, who hoped her large fortune would make her amends for the diſappointment ſhe muſt meet with. "This was our ſituation," ſaid ſhe, "when my huſband left us; and "in his laſt letter, he tells us all is ſet-

"tled

" tled to our ſatisfaction; that his ſon is " free, and that notwithſtanding what he " will have given up on this affair, he " will ſtill be rich enough to offer his " hand and fortune to the amiable com- " panion he has made choice of, whom " at his return he hopes to call daughter; " that he rejoices at it beforehand, and " partakes of his ſon's happineſs."

Judge, my dear mamma, how the heart of your poor Ninette was ſoftened and affected during this recital. I took Madame Sping's hand, which I wetted with my tears, and intreated her ſon to aſſiſt me in acknowledging the goodneſs his parents had ſhewn me. I added, my expreſſions were too weak unleſs joined by him, and that I begged him to ſpeak for me, and aſſure them of my perfect ſubmiſſion to their will. " To be happy " yourſelf, and to make my ſon ſo," ſaid Madame Sping, " is all I have to " wiſh. Go, my dear children, and take " a walk in the garden, while I write " to my huſband to tell him what has " paſſed." I begged her permiſſion to add

a few lines in her letter. She had the goodneſs to tell me ſhe was delighted that I had prevented her from aſking this piece of attention to her huſband, which ſhe was certain would afford him great pleaſure. I therefore went to my chamber and wrote the following

BILLET.

" My dear and generous father, deign " to receive the thanks of a truly grate- " ful heart, which the poor Ninette on " her knees offers to you, for your great " condeſcenſion in calling her your " daughter. That dear and flattering " appellation will complete her felicity, " and continually remind her that it is " you, and you alone, who ſaved her " from the dangers to which her deſtiny " had expoſed her. You have been my " friend and protector; you will now " be my father; you will alſo be my " ſupport and my guide, to inſtruct me " how to make myſelf worthy of the

" huſband

" huſband you are going to give me;
" you and your dear lady will direct my
" ſteps in this new way of life; you will
" form me for the ſociety in which I am
" to live, and I ſhall learn to deſerve
" your kindneſs by imitating you both
" in the practice of virtue, of that pleaſ-
" ing and amiable virtue, which gives
" joy and happineſs to all around you,
" and forms the delightful union of your
" family. Theſe are the wiſhes of your
" reſpectful and moſt grateful

" NINETTE."

I folded this billet, and ſent it to Madame Sping. I then went into the garden to find her ſon who waited there for me. I enjoyed for the firſt time, in going to him, that pleaſure, which a delicate heart feels when it may without ſcruple yield to its tender emotions!— There, ſaid I, ſeeing him at a diſtance ſeated in an arbour of lilacs, there is the dear object for whom my heart no longer bluſhes to acknowledge its tenderneſs. But what do I ſay? Would it not al-

ways have been my only felicity ?—but without the conſent of his parents I muſt always have been forced to conceal my love. What a ſevere law muſt I have impoſed on myſelf! Alas ! I muſt have flown from him to be able to do it.

" But what is it I ſee?" ſaid I. " Why " do I find you in this profound reve- " rie ?"— " My deareſt love," ſaid he, looking on me with eyes filled with tears ; " pardon a moment's ſadneſs, of which " you are the occaſion. In reflecting " upon my happineſs, I could not help " thinking of the misfortune which " would overwhelm me, were I to loſe " you, or were my death——— But let " us drive away theſe fatal ideas ; come " to my arms, my tender love ; come " and reanimate my heart by the ſweet " warmth of your's. Let them unite " themſelves, never more to ſeparate. " Tell me that you love me ; repeat a " thouſand times that you will be mine ; " mine only, and for ever."—" Yes," replied I, " I ſwear to you that I love " you ; that my pride as well as happi- " neſs is, to be your's entirely, and only " your's ;

" your's; and if neceſſary, I would ſeal " it with my blood."

I went farther, my dear mamma, and acknowledged to him the affection I had entertained for him and the ſecret complaints I had made of the hard laws which honour preſcribes, in condemning me never to make known to him theſe ſentiments. I dared not, I told him, give myſelf up to thoſe tender impreſſions without trembling, which his company inſpired me with. I bluſhed a hundred times a-day at my own weakneſs. I intreated the Supreme Being not to let me love any other than the perſon deſtined to be my huſband. " How far was I from think- " ing," ſaid I, " of the happineſs which " was in ſtore for me, when you declared " your love, and offered me your hand!"

" Charming Ninette!" ſaid he, interrupting me, " your heart is painted in " thoſe beautiful eyes which I adore.— " It is in them I read my happineſs.— " They told me I was beloved before " your lips pronounced it.—They will " ever be to me the true interpreters of

" your

" your heart.—Heaven grant they may
" never ſhed any other tears than thoſe
" of love and tenderneſs!"

Theſe gloomy and ſad ideas, the ſighs that eſcaped him involuntarily, and the oppreſſion at his heart, ought to have diſcovered to me the misfortune with which I was threatened; but my joy did not permit me to obſerve any thing in his expreſſions but the enthuſiaſm of love. Alas! how was I able to divine a thing of which I had not a ſingle idea? How ſhould I know the barbarous laws which honour preſcribes? Could I ſuppoſe that the wiſeſt and moſt prudent of men often become victims to madmen, who, under ſome pretence or other, attack lives ſo precious to their families, their friends, and even to the ſtate! Alas! I had no ſuſpicion of it, and I wiſh I had ever remained ignorant of it.

During the reſt of the day M. Sping appeared perfectly eaſy and tranquil. M. and Madame London came to ſupper and were informed our marriage was fixed. This charming friend never ceaſed telling me what

what pleaſure ſhe had in the thoughts of calling me ſiſter. "Now," ſaid ſhe, "my wiſhes are accompliſhed; after "my own marriage, I wiſhed for nothing "but to ſee you united to my brother; "thank God we are all happy." She then thanked her mother for having given her conſent ſo willingly to a union ſo deſirable. In ſhort, ſhe did not give her huſband leave to ſpeak ſix words, her joy was ſo extreme. The evening paſſed very gaily, and as M. and Madame London ſlept here, we remained together after Madame Sping had retired. I wiſh I were able to repeat to you the converſation we had; but you, my dear mamma, who know how to love and to prefer the moſt amiable of men, and the moſt worthy of eſteem, for your huſband, will eaſily imagine what it was. If you have ever had any fears for his life, you will tremble for mine, on learning what I have to tell you more of this day ſo intereſting to me. I was very far from thinking of the ſhocking event which was to end it. If I had not been ſo much abſorbed in joy,

I muſt

I muſt have obſerved the uneaſineſs and trembling of M. Sping when he bid me, perhaps, a laſt adieu. Alas! he knew not how to leave me, but returning back again, and taking my hand and Madame London's, he embraced us both, and entreated us to love each other as tender and affectionate ſiſters. I had not even then any ſuſpicion; but I felt an uneaſy ſenſation at my heart. About an hour after I had retired, I heard ſomebody knock at my door; my terror increaſed when I found it was Madame London, who called to me with a voice ſcarcely intelligible. She appeared much agitated, and entreated me to open the door directly.

"What misfortune," cried I, "am I "going to be informed of? God pre- "ſerve the life of your dear brother!"— "Make yourſelf eaſy;—be compoſed;" ſaid this kind ſiſter, as ſhe entered my chamber. "Be compoſed!" ſaid I; "what, when I ſee you ſo unhappy?— "What dreadful accident has happen- "ed? M. Sping, your brother, where is "he———?" Tears were her only anſwer.

anſwer. "Ah, then," ſaid I, "he is loſt!" At theſe words I fainted in her arms, and when I came to myſelf, I found I was in bed without knowing how I came there. The inſtant I opened my eyes, I felt all the extent of my miſery. "What, do I yet live? Oh leave me, "leave me to die," ſaid I to a waiting-woman, who offered me ſomething to take; "I have nothing now worth liv-"ing for." M. London, who waited to hear me ſpeak, in order that I might hear him, came to my bed-ſide, and, after having ſent away the ſervant who waited on me, told me he came to bring me good news. "Ah! my dear friend," ſaid I, holding out my hand to him, "have pity on me, and tell me if he is "alive, and if I ſhall ever ſee him "again?"—"Yes, charming Ninette, "he is alive, and loves you more than "ever; make yourſelf eaſy, and live for "him."——"But tell me," ſaid I, "where he is, and whether I can ſee "him? What can have happened to "him?"—"I will tell you," anſwered he,

he, "when you are more compoſed; in "the mean time, read this billet which "he has written to you, and charged me "to deliver." I kiſſed the hand which preſented the billet, and knowing his hand-writing, read as follows:

"COMFORT yourſelf, my deareſt love, "I live to love and adore you. Pardon "the pain I have given you; it is the "only one you ſhall ever have on my "account. One word in anſwer, my "ſweet friend, from your hand, will be "the moſt healing balſam to my wound, "which is ſlight, but nevertheleſs pre-"vents me from coming to throw my-"ſelf at your feet. My brother will "tell you the reſt of this diſagreeable "adventure, which I am not able to re-"late to you, as I am not permitted to "write more."

"He is wounded then!" ſaid I, look-ing at M. London. "Where is he? "Lead me to him; I muſt ſee him; I "muſt ſee his wound, and dreſs it for "him.—He is ill, and I am not with

"him,

"him, to conſole with and to ſhare his "grief."—"Mademoiſelle," ſaid M. London, "hear me one moment, and "put your confidence in me." He then told me, it was an affair of honour, which had obliged M. Sping to fight with one of his friends. "With a friend!" cried I; and I trembled when he explained to me what this cruel law was, which allowed and authoriſed ſuch inhuman proceedings. At laſt, he told me it was M. Harture with whom M. Sping had fought, and that it was on my account. M. Harture, he ſaid, was deeply wounded, and if he ſhould not recover, M. Sping would be obliged to go away for ſome time; but that it would be very eaſy to obtain his acquittal becauſe he was not the aggreſſor; but that in the mean time he muſt be concealed. "And where is his poor "mother?" ſaid I. "Does ſhe know—?" He interrupted me by ſaying, ſhe knew the whole of it, and that his wife was with her, who would not have left me, but that hearing her mother's

ther's bell ring ſhe ran to her, becauſe ſhe feared ſhe had heard ſomething which made her uneaſy. "Alas!" replied I, "it is I who am the cauſe of her grief, "and I am not at her feet to entreat her "forgiveneſs; permit me to riſe and go "to her."—"I will leave you to riſe," ſaid he; "but it is on condition that you "do not go to Madame Sping's cham-"ber. She cannot ſee you till ſhe is a "little more compoſed."—"I will obey "her whatever it coſts me," ſaid I; "but "I entreat you to endeaour to procure me "her pardon. Beg of her to love me. She "is ſo kind, I hope. Yes, tell her I hope "ſhe will reſtore to me her friendſhip "and tenderneſs, notwithſtanding the "pain I have cauſed her."—"Make "yourſelf eaſy on that account; ſhe "has not ceaſed to love you; ſhe pities "you, and wants to ſee you; but ſhe "fears it will affect her too much, till "her mind is leſs agitated."—"And "the poor little Sophia," ſaid I; "what "does ſhe do?"—"Sophy knows no-"thing of the matter; ſhe ſlept quiet-

"ly;

" ly; her's is a happy age," ſaid M. London; " the paſſions have as yet " no empire over her mind."—" But the " poor invalid," ſaid I; " are you not " going back to him, M. London? Will " you not tell me where he is, before you " leave me?"—" No, Madam, I cannot " tell you. I will do every thing you " order me; but I muſt not betray the " ſecrets of my friends."—" Well then," ſaid I, " at leaſt tell me if he is com- " fortably lodged and well attended, " and if he has every thing neceſſary for " him in his preſent ſituation?"—" I " give you my word," ſaid he, " I tell " you nothing but truth; he is well " lodged and carefully attended, and has " the beſt ſurgeon in the country, who " will not leave him till his wound is en- " tirely cured."—" Is his wound really " a ſlight one?" ſaid I. " Indeed, M. " London, you reſtore me to life; how " much am I indebted to you for your " kindneſs; and you will ſtill increaſe " my gratitude if you will take back my " anſwer to his note."—" I am too ſen-

" ſible,"

" ſible," ſaid he, "of the pleaſure I " ſhall give him, to dare to return with- " out carrying this conſolation to him. " I ſhall therefore leave you to write, " while I go to my mother-in-law." The following is what I wrote

To M. Sping.

" Is it then true, my dear and tender " friend, that you have eſcaped from a " monſter who attempted your life?— " Has this perfidious wretch dared to " lay his wicked hands upon you with- " out trembling with fear and horror? " Did not his heart relent when he " thought of the cruel ſituation to which " he would reduce a whole family, be- " ſides your friends and himſelf? Per- " haps his barbarous heart could not " ſtifle his remorſe. Nothing would have " ſtopped him, but the courage of a " generous friend, who fought with re- " luctance this tyger ſo thirſty for his " blood, that he was only ſenſible to the " ſtrokes which diſabled him from pur-

" ſuing

" ſuing his vengeance. He has deſer-
" vedly met with his reward. But you,
" my dear friend, whom he has cruelly
" injured and wounded; what have
" you done to him to excite that hatred
" which had nearly proved ſo fatal to us
" all? If I am the cauſe of it, as they
" tell me, why did he ſpare me? But
" what do I ſay? He has wounded me
" more cruelly in your perſon. How
" ſhall I ſupport the ſad ſituation I am
" in at this time, at a diſtance from you,
" and ignorant where you are? I can
" be of no uſe to you alone and deſerted
" in my chamber; I can neither ſee nor
" conſole my friends, nor partake of their
" griefs. The idea of this makes me
" wretched: but ought I to complain
" while you ſuffer, and are employed in
" giving me comfort? How ſweet is
" the conſolation you give me! You re-
" ſtore me to life by aſſuring me your's
" is in ſafety. How welcome to my heart
" was the meſſenger who brought me
" this precious proof of your living,
" and of your love. You live for me,

" you

" you live to love me. Preſerve, then, " that life which is dearer to me than " my own. How does your ſituation " ſoften and grieve me! I think I ſee " you pale and weak, on a bed of ſick- " neſs, where you ſuffer without com- " plaining, and without accuſing the " author of your misfortune! How " much do I wiſh we were together! If " I were but near you, my conſtant at- " tentions might, perhaps, haſten your " recovery; at leaſt, I flatter myſelf it " would; and I ſuffer the more becauſe " of the impoſſibility there is of my " proving to you the extent of my af- " fection. Your brother waits. Adieu. " I embrace you, as I love you."

M. London left me, after aſſuring me he would next day bring me news of our dear invalid; I paſſed the day moſt melancholy, and did not quit my chamber; neither did I ſee any one but Madame London and her ſiſter Sophia, who, to comfort me for not being with their dear mamma, came very frequently to tell me how

how ſhe was, and to repeat to me every thing ſhe ſaid that was kind of me. There is no one but you, my dear mamma, who can be compared with this amiable woman; ſhe not only forgives me for having been the cauſe of this unhappy accident, but it appears that I am even the more dear to her; ſhe was ſo much afraid that I ſhould ſuſpect the contrary, that ſhe came to me the next morning before I was up; they had been cautioning me not to ſeem too much afflicted, but I was not able to refrain from tears when I embraced her, and ſhe alſo wept herſelf for ſome minutes; but when we were a little compoſed, ſhe told me ſhe came to me in order to make the time ſeem ſhorter till ſhe could hear of her ſon's health. "What moſt diſtreſſes "me," ſaid ſhe, "is, that I know no "more than you where he is concealed: "I gueſs why they have kept it a ſecret; "they thought I ſhould go to him: but "they were wrong; for I know how to "ſubmit to particular circumſtances, "and I ſhould not run the riſk of en-

" dangering my ſon: however, I for-
" give them all; if he is but well, it is
" all I wiſh."—" Ah! madam, you per-
" fectly know your children, and can
" ſuſpect them of nothing but their
" fears of your ſuffering from too great
" an affection for them."—" I am very
" well ſatisfied," ſaid ſhe, " and they
" deſerve all I have done for them;
" I always thought they loved me, and
" that made me ample amends for the care
" I took of their education; theſe are the
" firſt tears my ſon ever made me ſhed."
—" He muſt not be conſidered as the
" cauſe, my dear madam," ſaid I; " it
" is I, it is my unhappy deſtiny that
" has occaſioned them."—" I reproach
" nobody, my love," ſaid ſhe; " I know
" it was not your fault, if this cruel M.
" Harture loves you; you have done
" well to ſend him from you, and not
" give him any hopes that he might ever
" gain your affections. You ſee," con-
tinued ſhe, " that I am better ac-
" quainted with this matter than you
" think for," ſeeing my aſtoniſhment at

hearing

hearing what ſhe had juſt ſaid: " I " know it all," ſaid ſhe; " do you " think I have not made a ſtrict inquiry " into your conduct ſince I ſaw my ſon " ſo much attached to you? Nothing " eſcaped me, and you ſee the reſult of " my obſervations."—" My dear ma- " dam," ſaid I, " if you could look " into my heart, you would ſee how " ſenſible it is of your kindneſs, and " that its only wiſh is to deſerve it."— " I know your heart," ſaid Madame Sping, " ſo well, that I congratulate " myſelf every day with the conqueſt " we have gained, and bleſs the day " when you came to us. You know " not, my dear child, the obligations " we are under to you, for having pre- " ſerved our dear ſon from ruin: alas! " my huſband and I both ſaw him on " the brink of deſtruction; it is you " who have reſtored him to himſelf and " to his duty; it is to pleaſe you, and " to merit your affection, that he has " quitted a dangerous ſociety, which inſenſibly would have drawn him from

" his

" his family."—While ſhe was ſaying theſe words, M. London came in with an air of ſatisfaction which inſtantly informed us he had good news to communicate. " I am ordered," ſaid he, " by my brother, to embrace you both, " and to aſſure you he will very ſoon be " as well as I am." He then gave us a circumſtantial and pleaſing account of M. Sping's ſituation, and aſſured us he might venture out in a few days, if M. Harture's wound went on as well as it was at preſent. He then delivered a letter to me, and another to Madame Sping, who took her ſon-in-law by the hand and led him out of the room, in order, as ſhe ſaid, to leave me at liberty to read my letter, which I did with great eagerneſs and pleaſure.

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